

H I N T S
O N H O U S E
F U R N I S H I N G



DINING-ROOM AT ST. HELEN'S, BOURNEMOUTH
Messrs. Morris & Co., London

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

BY

W. SHAW SPARROW

AUTHOR OF

"THE ENGLISH HOUSE," AND

EDITOR OF "THE MODERN HOME,"

"THE BRITISH HOME OF TO-DAY," &c.

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PART I
THE SUBJECT INTRODUCED

CHAPTER I

HOUSE AND HOME

“Ill-spent money is a double loss.”—PROVERB.

ONE art is democratic in the fullest meaning of that word ; all the world follows it as a matter of course, kings and queens leading the way, slum-dwellers keeping at a remote and pathetic distance ; and this art turns houses into homes, for that is the result of *all* furnishing, whether bad or good. The difference between good and bad furnishing is quite easy to state ; the one gives comfort to the body and pleasure to the eye, while the other does not, but wastes money on jerry-made work, as if ugliness and discomfort were not like gambling debts, which give hostages to ill-luck.

And so the topic of this book is a problem, or a set of problems, not in a vague something called Decoration, but in a direct and tangible benefit to ourselves known as Mother-wit or Common Sense. The greatest connoisseurs hold very different views on styles of decoration, and quarrel over them with a blind pugnacity, forgetting that discordant tastes are not reconciled by arguments ; and so our aim must be to look for a court of arbitration where peace may have a chance of reigning, and this court we find in common sense. If I

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give you practical hints, with guiding principles of design, we can differ amicably on native preferences of taste and on matters of opinion. We cannot all like the same good things, hence the methods of a drill sergeant are the worst in the world for any writer on art to employ.

Perhaps these are trite things to say, but trite things are often neglected truths, to the meaning of which we have been blinded by custom. The more reasonable they seem to be at a first glance, the less likely we are to ponder them until we know the full extent of their reasonableness. We go wrong in the household arts, not because our rash adventures have the charm of novelty, are new and attractive, but because they are too familiar to be understood, and ought therefore to be looked at from a fresh standpoint, one of common reason. Grave writers say, for instance, without the least hesitation, that the arts belong to experts and connoisseurs, and that laymen cannot hope to be on familiar terms with them: an opinion not in the least likely to encourage the public, nor is it borne out by well-known events. Molière's housekeeper was an excellent critic, Shakespeare made a fortune by pleasing the London people, and laymen to-day are the main patrons of art, let their judgment be false or true.

The principles of home decoration are held up as great mysteries, yet their appeals to the mind are quite simple and tangible, like the laws of cricket and football. The difficulty is to play the game well after the rules are learnt by heart.

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This being so, my aim here is to put simple matters in a plain way and to define any detail of my subject which has become vaguely misunderstood. "To furnish a home" is a very popular phrase, but have you ever tried to define it in practical terms? Is it nothing more than a phrase to you, or does it strike your mind as a statement in finance, needing care and definite plans?

Thousands of families might ask themselves those questions, keeping their eyes fixed on the unlucky "bargains" they bought years ago, just because they had no decided practical views on the most important event in their lives—the making of a home to last their time. Home is home, they thought; and the hard business of furnishing became a pastime for odd half-hours.

A house or flat has to be taken at a given rent, after many defeats from a league of agents and landlords; and then a multitude of things must be chosen from a multitude of samples, chosen, too, with infinite care for a given purpose, and with the knowledge that mistakes accumulate rapidly and must be paid for. So we are concerned here not merely with a choice of furniture, but with a financial act having two powers: it may purchase failure and loss, or find a sure investment for pleasure and labour and capital.

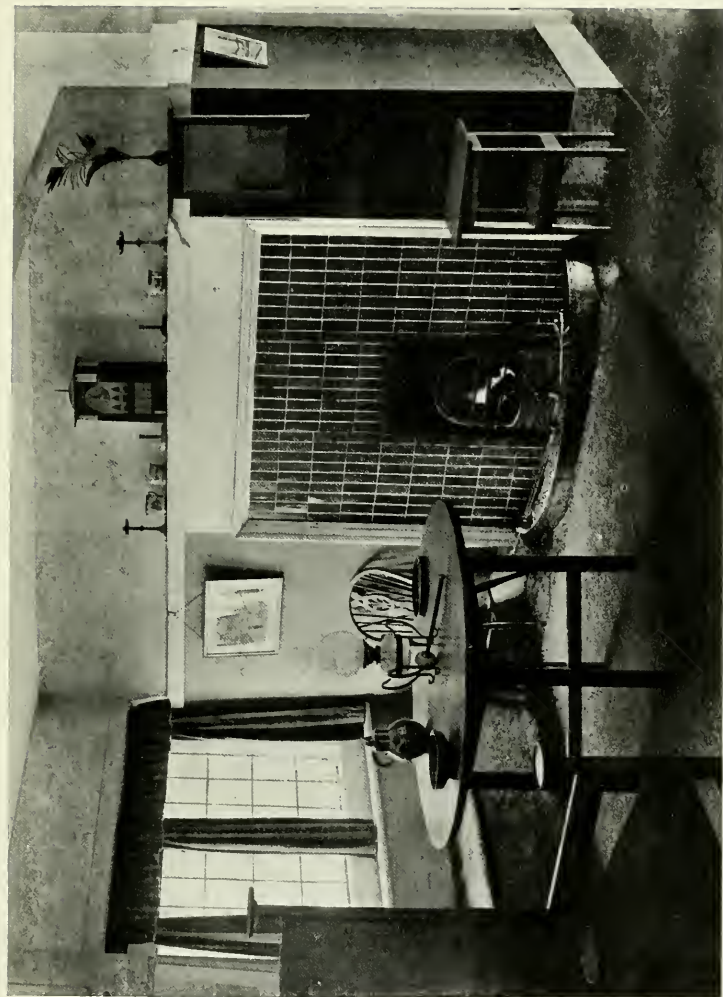
Of course the investment may be either large or small as far as the money is concerned; still, whether small or large, it should yield the highest possible interest in the way we expect, if only because a small sum of money

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to the poor is all-important, as much so, perhaps, as fifty thousand pounds may be to a millionaire. The principle here is not affected by wealth and poverty. A cottage may be furnished with fifty pounds or with five hundred thousand; the problem is that nothing should be chosen which is not the best of its kind at the price paid for it. If we pay little or much for discomfort we still buy discomfort, and our purchase, *vide* the proverb, is a double loss; our money is gone and there is nothing to represent it worthily.

Thus the aim of furnishing is to get the maximum of attractive comfort at a given price, namely, the price that a householder can afford without harm to his immediate prospects. The comfort, too, however little it may cost in money, must wear well, for the price of an article need not affect its utility and strength. Excellent furniture is made in common woods, like deal, ash, and foreign oaks; good ironwork lasts as long as gold; pewter is serviceable like silver; and remember the earthenware pots which have come down to us from prehistoric times.

But the average man is always on the look-out for the exceptions that prove a rule, while admitting that no exception is at all possible in his own trade or profession. Thus a tailor buys for his own use the best cloth, having no faith in the low-priced materials that look for a time unlike shoddy. Yet he hopes to get "bargains" in cheap boots and in furniture sold at the cost of shoddy. He does not seem to mind when



THE HALL, "THE ORCHARD," CHORLEY WOOD

C. F. A. VOYSEY, *Architect*, London

The photograph by HENRY IRVING, Bromley, Kent



THE HALL, BENGEO HOUSE

WALTER CAVE, *Architect*, London

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inexpensive materials ape the qualities of more costly woods and metals, as though sham were not deception ; and he appears to believe that outside his own trade money is to be saved by purchasing household things which are neither pleasant to look at nor lasting, things without "nature," as cabinetmakers say ; they do not wear but wear out. Think of the houses known to you and you will find that I do not exaggerate. It is the rarest thing in everyday life to come upon a well-furnished home.

When we remember that good workmanship and design may be put into the commonest woods, metals, and textile fabrics, the rarity of well-made homes in England is a bad sign, for the arts test and prove the worth of all civilisation. To encourage inferior work of any kind is to degrade workmen, tradesmen and ourselves ; and to be content with homes which are not creditable is certain to have a bad effect on wives and on children. This opinion is held by those who are best able to judge the causes of drunkenness, the frequency of cruelties to children, the growing discontent among married women, and the results of that wish to pass evenings away from home which leads to extravagance among all classes.

A very wise man of early times—Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury—wishing to benefit the people, issued a code of household laws, practical enough to remain by the fireside among the rich and the poor ; and something of the same kind ought to be done now by the

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State. Why not teach the people, little by little, how to succeed in their furnishing and housekeeping? Why not grant degrees to all women and girls who pass a regulation course in Household Economics? Surely that would be a national education?

Education should begin at home, in the people's homes, and hence the wisdom shown at the Women's Department of King's College, London, where, on October 2, 1908, a course of study was set on foot in all household subjects, from the care of children to the principles of architecture and decoration. This good work was instituted by Lady Rücker and a committee of educational authorities; it appeals to the leisured classes only; but the State should make it general and national.

Time was when the household arts had traditions that grew from age to age, adapting themselves to social needs that changed and improved among all classes. Each class had a traditional form of home decoration. The poor either bought their furniture from village carpenters, or made it themselves during the long winter evenings; they loved big fires, and bright pots and pans, they patterned brick floors with whiting stone, and coloured the walls in different ways. They did what they could afford to do, not in a shame-faced manner, but with pride and thoroughness.

Then a revolution took place in social life, and was so complete that it spared only the good old-fashioned cottagers and farmers. Steam and machinery passed

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from one conquest to another : a wonderful industrialism swallowed up large country districts ; and by this means, with amazing rapidity, a new civilisation was made in the rough, for there was no time to build with care.

It was then that Ruskin began his campaign, helped by many good men and true, as by Mr. Walter Crane and the late William Morris. The aim was to revive the lost arts and handicrafts, but these good things have much in common with children ; the more they are petted and coaxed, the less likely are they to be strong, manly, and useful to their generation. Art schools were opened in many places, only to become hotbeds of affectation ; and this fact passed unnoticed for a long time. Then attempts were made to improve a very defective system, the best efforts being those of the Art Workers' Guild, the Arts and Crafts Society, Mr. C. R. Ashbee's workshops at Campden, in Gloucestershire, and the Home Arts and Industries, a practical association with many useful branches. One cannot speak too highly of its aims and of its work.

But these signs of progress, admirable as they are, denote nothing more than a revival in decorative art, and the very fact that there is a revival proves that the arts in question have been sick unto death. "In all such changes," said William Morris, "the first of the new does not appear till there is little or no life left in the old, and yet the old, even when it is all but dead, goes on living in corruption, and refuses to get itself put quietly out of the way and decently buried." So that

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while the revival advances and does some good work, we must not make too much fuss about it, but keep in mind the bad furnishing to be met with in most houses, and hope for a better time. The necessary thing is that good taste—namely a delight in good work—should become as national as sport, or, better still, as national as the English language with its many varied and pleasant dialects. The feeling for beauty used to be national, during those days when village masons were excellent architects, and when the costumes worn by artisans and peasants were distinctive and picturesque.

To-day, on the other hand, we cannot do anything fairly well without becoming as excited over it as a hen over a brood of ducks. A well-built cottage is an event, and a bit of good furniture is advertised as “Art” furniture. “Art” kettles appear to be in vogue, accompanied by “Art” brooms; and the other day I came upon some “Art” knives and forks, useless every one, for they were inconvenient, their handles being unpleasant to hold. The absurdities now done under the name of Art may be reckoned up by dozens; and (what is even worse) that hackneyed word raises the cost price for the average buyer. The whole matter is quite farcical. Things are well made or ill made, useful or the reverse; and if they are bad of their kind they are dear at any price, like forged half-crowns. Besides, all household things should be made well as a matter of course, just as the coinage of the day is made well, whether of copper, silver, or gold. That is the main point, since household

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necessaries *are* a national coinage, and their effect on character and life is not less important than that of the other coinage. Neither can be debased without doing much harm of a public kind. That is why economists attach so much value to the household arts. To give two or three concrete examples: a great many cups are cracked by hot tea and coffee; many teapots have their handles in the wrong place, with the result that a woman cannot use them without tiring her wrist; and how many chairs are too frail to be in a house with children?

Examine these ordinary facts and you will see that each represents a public fraud. It matters not what the cost of the articles may be. A cup sold as a teacup should bear hot tea without cracking; if it fails to do that the buyer is robbed of a sum of money, which is of more consequence to the poor than to the rich. There are cups at sixpence each that crack in a few days, and this imposition means a steady and a daily loss to limited incomes. But there are frauds of two kinds: some are punishable by law, like the forging of silver pieces; while others are punished by a loss of trade, and this punishment is rare under the competition that rules to-day, because things sold at a given price are usually of the same "nature," however varied their shape and design may be. It is this that gives so much importance to the examples of public fraud which I have chosen at random, and from which we get a principle both in economics and in household art: "*All articles in daily*

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use must be fitted for their purpose, no matter what their cost happens to be."

Sometimes, but not always, a purchaser's judgment can decide this point, as in the case of a teapot with the handle wrongly placed. A practised housewife would detect that fault in the shop by lifting the teapot and trying to "pour it out," but a young wife might be deceived. Again, if chairs which are made to look like rosewood or mahogany are offered at first hand for the price of deal chairs, any one should feel suspicious, and know that they cannot be either rosewood or mahogany; but another point is far more difficult to ascertain, namely, their wearing strength. Are they fitted for their purpose? If not, they are frauds.

This principle applies to everything in a house—and to every person also. A woman is a fraud if she marries before she has taught herself to be a housekeeper: she is the queen of a little kingdom and should know her duties from the first hour of her reign; and this responsibility is all the more honourable because a home is a nation in miniature. Our principle, then, is now enlarged and runs thus: "All things and all persons in a home should be fitted for the special work which they have to do."

We have seen thus far that it is easy to illustrate the fact mentioned on page 3, that to equip a home for a given cost and income is a set of problems, not in a vague thing known as Decoration, over which experts differ vehemently, but in common sense, in quite

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ordinary reasonableness. There is no excuse whatever if we furnish a house at random and in haste, either making it unsuited to our needs and social position, or giving it an air of discomfort that throws a chill over the happiness of married life. For another principle to be remembered is this: that discomfort tells very strongly against women, and as women pass the greater part of their lives indoors, ministering to the wants of men and of children, homes belong to them and should be theirs in refinement. What men do not mind at all, because their day's work is done away from home, may be demoralising to their wives, who are face to face with it all day long. Women are by nature sensitive to their surroundings, and quick to adapt themselves to the external circumstances of life, whether favourable or not. For this reason, then, it is a moral duty to give each wife the best home that can be made for a given sum of money, which ought not to be more than a married couple can afford.

You may be sure that no abominable fashion of sheer discomfort was ever introduced into homes by educated women, though they have been compelled to accept many, and among these fashions was the wicked horsehair cloth that some upholsterers now wish to revive as "a Novelty," and that came first into vogue in or about the year 1789. Hepplewhite then laid it down as an axiom of good taste that "mahogany chairs should have seats of horsehair, plain, striped, chequered, &c., at pleasure." The men of the period welcomed this

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innovation, partly because horsehair lasted an indefinite long time, and partly because they did not feel how unpleasant it was, for they liked to be as tipsy as Squire Western when they remained at home. So the evolution of horsehair cloth was left entirely in the hands of men, till at last it became a prickly thing of horror, black, shiny, and slippery, its worst characteristic being that time and use failed to wear out its old discomfort. One widow lady accepted it as an act of mourning, and in all the rooms of a beautiful old house. "You see," said she with pathos, "my husband believed in horsehair, perhaps because he was very fond of hunting: it reminds me of him now, and I must not get rid of it."

Still, the unreasonableness of men has limits. It is not a man's voice that we hear in the familiar regret, "What a lovely home we could have if only we had money enough!" It is a cry of envy (as a rule), provoked by a visit to what house-agents call "a splendid abode." Visits of that kind unsettle many female minds. To see a house richer than her own is a tragedy to many a woman not by nature very ambitious. Yet the common belief that wealth is the basis of household comfort is not, of course, borne out by experience. The art of furnishing is, indeed, the judgment with which we accept our lot in life and do with success what we can afford to attempt. Some persons would begin to pine after Windsor Castle if they inherited the finest mansion in Park Lane; it is their particular kind of

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pleasurable self-pity—to despise what they have by yearning for things which they are not likely to get. Put them in Windsor Castle, and their thoughts would live enviously at Sandringham and Buckingham Palace. This absurd habit of mind is envy, a colonist that never colonises, and it is found to-day, in modified forms, among all classes. Only a person here and there makes a home in keeping with his social position. Most of us attempt too much, and failure is the inevitable result. Meantime, to confirm the public in this want of common sense, a thousand newspapers and journals, read by persons with very limited incomes, speak about costly fashions as though they were essential to everybody.

With this passion for luxury in the air, a book on furnishing cannot be easy to write. Journalists may talk about “the ideal home,” but the chief furniture in a house are human beings, and if these have ideas beyond their means a home is a financial disaster. It is only women and men with the right temperaments who can make ideal homes, and if they have such temperaments they will admit that it is easier to do well with a small sum of money than to spend a large sum with judgment and success. This, too, is a guiding principle in the equipment of a house, and a great architect put it in the form of an axiom: “Good taste furnishes a house for peasants to live in.”

He knew from experience that to invest many thousands of pounds in works of art requires more time and greater knowledge than the rich have (as a rule) at

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their command, unless they employ a "spender," a connoisseur to buy for them, to rule over their furnishing as a conductor governs a large orchestra.

Once upon a time a millionaire formed a collection of pictures and furniture, not only without help but in opposition to friendly good advice. He knew what he liked, and had no feeling for the right things in the right places, which is the secret of all good furnishing however humble or however costly. He bought many fine objects, but put them at variance with each other, so that they looked absurd; just as scraps from ancient tapestries would be absurd if they were patched into a beautiful Persian carpet. Among the jumbles of style which this millionaire hit upon, goodness knows how or why, was a combination of French impressionist pictures, a "nouveau art" carpet, Pergolese furniture, an Early Victorian wall-paper, Tudor panelling about five feet high, a Lincrusta frieze, a fireplace designed by the brothers Adam, and some modern Chinese pottery.

Was it worth while? That too adventurous wealthy man, and many others, have but one thing to learn, and it is well put in Dr. Abernethy's dictum, "Seek the best advice—and pay for it."

But to us—the poor majority—the matter is different; we cannot afford to turn the arts of the world into our obedient servants; but we ought certainly to remember that the more we attempt to do the more likely we are to fail. Let every ambition sit comfortably in its own saddle, *voilà tout!*

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I have in mind some rooms furnished at two different periods, sixty years ago and the day before yesterday. The furniture is Early Victorian, ugly, but so strong and so heavy that it seems to have been made for all the giants that ever lived in fables. The carpet and the wall-paper are modern, and also very athletic ; the paper darts out from the wall, while the carpet practises a high jump all day long. When visitors look down upon its pattern they are reminded of the Irishman who said of his ancestors that they did not spring from any one but sprang at everybody. The Victorian furniture has the merit of being sound in workmanship, while the rest of the room has no more education than a certain huntsman who went “ ‘ammer, ‘ammer, ‘ammer, down the ‘ard ‘igh road, ‘eedless of ‘ounds and ‘orses.” On the walls there are some tawdry prints in frames which must have cost twenty shillings each, the price at which framed photographs of celebrated pictures may be bought at many shops.

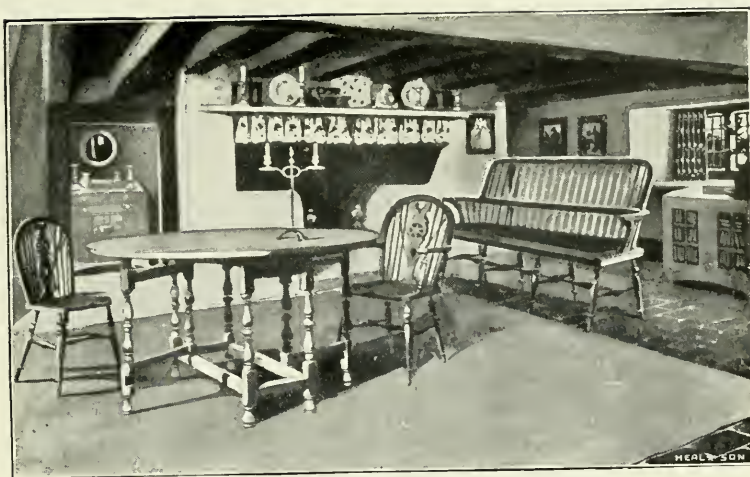
But if “Good taste furnishes a house for peasants to live in,” there must be another side to this question, and a good example may be taken from the country. A young couple set up as farmers, in a Tudor homestead having mullioned windows and oak panels. The ground floor was divided into a kitchen and a hall, and a few steps from each room led down into a long dairy. An oak staircase near the hall went up to the bedroom floor ; and another staircase hidden from sight gave access to some chambers under the roof beams. There

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was more than space enough to be furnished, but the young couple went to work in a traditional way and set a good example to those of us who live in towns, making up their minds to be pleased with the little they could do well, and not to buy anything because "it would fill a place."

Some women are ashamed if they have empty rooms in their houses, while this good farmer's wife said simply, "We've plenty of empty rooms; there was no need to furnish them all at once; we're young and can wait. My mother did that and her mother too. The chairs and chests downstairs belonged to them, and look neat against the wall-panels; and my man is cleaning the whitewash off the beams in the ceiling. The brick floors were rather cold at first, but we're used to them now. They seem quite nice, don't you think?"

For they were beautifully clean, and the worn bricks were good in colour, like the sturdy oak chests, benches, and chairs. The rest of the furniture was simplicity itself: a few metal pots and pans, two oak tables, some bright milk pails, a draught-screen by the front door and a cradle near a big open fireplace. It was just a farmer's home, modest, quiet, clean, and useful. It gave the character of those who lived there. If the farmer or his wife had been ashamed of their position, there would have been something to annoy the eye; perhaps the panelling would have been grained, or the brick floors hidden under shoddy carpets, or a jerry-made

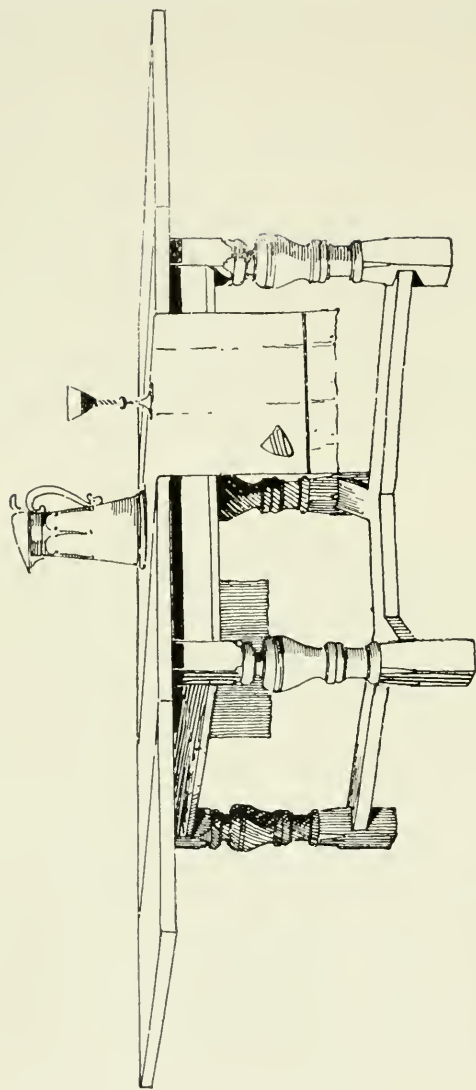


A GOOD EXAMPLE OF PLAIN OAK FURNITURE



FOR COTTAGES AND NURSERIES

Made by HEAL & SON, London



The length of this table can be altered in a manner at once simple and ingenious. The leaves which increase its size slide under the top, and when required for use have simply to be drawn forward and they at once fall into line with the centre. The Top is always level, whether we use one leaf or both leaves.

Made by Story & Co., Kensington, London

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sofa with startling pillows would have been preferred to the old oak settle.

Yet there is another point of view. Our time is one of industrialism, and industrialism is a form of war, a vast competition between many nations ; it needs courage, enterprise, invention, forethought, strategy, tactics, and a multitude of skirmishers known as travellers, and advertisements. But no kind of war can be pleasant, and this one has many tricks and customs which are more likely to benefit sellers than buyers. I have mentioned the misuse of the word Art which raises the purchasing price of necessary things even where no attention is given to the first principles of good design ; and we have seen that commodities sold for a given purpose are frauds if they do not serve that purpose efficiently. But to see that is not to see all. If the people want Art which is not Art, and cry out for a cheapness which is dear at any price, what are tradesmen to do ? When the public dictates the manufacturers must obey.

CHAPTER II

A FEW WORDS ON CHEAPNESS

SOME critics go so far as to condemn the whole system of modern trade. They never speak about a manufacturer without sneering at him, for they forget that he represents his time and the popular fashions of the hour. The ideal critics say: "We have a scorn for trading firms, because they deceive the people with advertisements and lower the value of work in all articles of furniture. We hate the so-called industrial progress which makes shoddy wares, the cheapness of which is paid for by the lives of craftsmen and by the degradation of public taste. Why should men be turned into machines, and why should the immediate market value, the daily hunt after profits, be the chief test of artistic merit?"

Ideal critics are troublesome neighbours, because they allow their thoughts to get stereotyped and one-sided. They do not see that no manufacturer can pay his workmen unless he satisfies the wants of his customers, and hence those customers are in part responsible for the merits or demerits of the wares they buy. The degree of this responsibility depends upon many circumstances. For instance, I go on buying sixpenny coffee cups that

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A FEW WORDS ON CHEAPNESS

crack in a few days, experience having taught me that more expensive cups that do not crack are soon broken by servants. In other words, if I did not encourage a fraudulent trade I should lose by other means perhaps an equal number of better cups. These are circumstances that help bad trades to flourish, and I know of but three ways in which the public could be safeguarded :

1. That the law should make it an indictable offence for any person to sell a thing for a given purpose when it is not fitted for that object.

2. That there should be a yearly National Congress of the British Home at which all real grievances of householders should be formulated and discussed.

3. That householders should form a league, establish a great central office in London, and defend their interest under legal advice and in a businesslike way, issuing month by month a printed record of the work done.

Meantime, let everybody make use of his common sense. If he gets cheap furniture in the belief that it is better than its price guarantees, he is certain to dupe himself, and some manufacturers will cater for him and his kind. Why should he buy eight bad chairs when he might easily get four good ones at the same price ? "I can tell you," said a friend to Thackeray, "where excellent wine may be bought *cheap*." "Indeed," said Thackeray ; "perhaps you know where a sovereign may be had for seventeen-and-sixpence ?"

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Things are not sold first-hand for less than their trade value. A cheap suite of furniture is nothing more than a suite of furniture that costs less than a better one. All the advertising in the world should not deceive a reasonable man, because trade is not a philanthropist but a hunter after profits, and cannot therefore afford to sell good work at the price of cheap work. The word "cheap" is a warning, like a hooked fly to a fish. If we swallow the bait we must expect to be "landed."

For everybody ought to have a general idea of the market prices of different woods and metals; everybody is aware, or should be, that common timber is stained to look like walnut, rosewood, and mahogany; the wages paid to skilled workmen are at least vaguely known to every one of us; rents, rates and taxes are other items in the cost of production; and if cheap furniture can be made under these conditions and put before the public in very expensive advertisements, it is because there is a market for the best-looking useless work that certain tradesmen can make and sell at a given price. Most of us in our time have experimented in cheap boots and shoes, only to find that they are dearer in the long run—or after a few walks in the rain—than a good pair at a just price. And this applies to all articles of daily use. There is, for example, a soft wood known as bass wood, which is easy to stain to any requisite shade; hence it is used to imitate other woods in modern furniture of the cheaper kinds. But it has no wear in it, and is therefore worthless in furniture. Why,

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then, is it employed? Just because people with little incomes prefer shams to serviceable woods like ash, deal, and foreign oaks. That is the reason. It is popularly believed that dark-tinted woods are more luxurious and refined than those which are pale in colour. Even oak is darkened with the fumes of liquid ammonia, which sink into it to almost any depth; and common oak is made into brown oak with a solution of chromate of potash, by which various light woods are "converted" into mahogany. Sycamore becomes ebony if you doctor it enough with logwood chips and then complete your treatment with an application of vinegar and steel filings. Pear-tree may be cured of its original character by the same means.

These trade secrets, and a good many others, give some pleasure to the devotees of cheapness, who will learn one day that shams have less value than real pear-wood, real sycamore, good common oak and friendly deal. Indeed, it is a principle in decorative art that the treatment of materials should bring out their special characteristics. There are few better things than the well-made deal tables in cottages and farm-houses, places where simple work is not vulgarised by foolish affectations.

And there is yet another technical point that laymen should bear in mind when cheap wooden furniture is offered to them at first-hand. There is a belief current that when large supplies of the same commodity are made by the same manufacturer the cost of production

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is lessened on each article, hence the advertised cheapness of the wares. Now this applies to many marketable things ; but wooden furniture is an exception, because woods are intractable, and behave in disagreeable ways that waste time and delay work. You may buy a piece of oak three hundred years old and believe that it is seasoned, but no sooner do you cut into it and expose a new surface to the air than the wood begins to twist a little. Other woods have the same peculiarity, and as it delays craftsmen in the making of good furniture it is a thing to be reckoned with in the cost of production. You will now understand why cheap furniture, cut and moulded by machinery and rapidly fitted together, is always covered with a thick and shiny varnish, to keep the air away from woods not thoroughly seasoned.

To give emphasis to this very important matter, I will quote here the opinion of an excellent craftsman and expert, Mr. Stephen Webb :

“ Good furniture cannot be made rapidly. All wood, no matter how long it is kept, nor how dry it may be superficially, will always shrink again when cut into. It follows that the longer the interval between the cutting up of the wood and its fitting together, the better for the work. In the old times the parts of a cabinet lay about in the workman’s benchway for weeks, and even months, and were continually turned over and handled by him while he was engaged on the mouldings and other details. The wood thus became really dry, and no

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further shrinkage could take place after it was put together." . . . But "the introduction of machinery for mouldings, which left only the fitting and polishing to be done by craftsmen, and which enabled manufacturers to produce two or three cabinets in the time formerly occupied in the making of one, was all against the quality and stability of the work."

These technical matters are helpful to us. When we know why good furniture cannot be made rapidly, we know also why it cannot be sold "cheap." Moreover, the leading manufacturers wish to do the best work but find themselves thwarted by two things: (1) the public wish to have sham woods rather than plain oak or ash, and (2) the prevailing ignorance of the technique of furniture-making. Householders, too, forgetting that the cost of production must be the same to reputable firms in the same town, are not content to ask for a catalogue from one good house, but write to *all* the manufacturers, and then put the catalogues in competition, with the result that inferior work is chosen from a second-rate firm. Even the rich frequently do that, and I often wonder that the best manufacturers keep their standard of workmanship as high as it is.

Last of all, there is but one way in which furniture may be bought "cheap," namely at a price below its real market value; and that way is to hunt for it at public auctions and in little shops hidden away in by-streets. Collecting is a pleasant hobby, but it costs a good deal in patience and time, and requires at least some know-

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ledge and a trained eye ; for many second-hand things are like some horses at a fair, unsound, yet attractive, nor is it easy to find out their defects. On the other hand, furniture may be trusted when it has borne without harm some years of wear and tear ; it comes to you as a tried servant with a good character from the last place.

But there are writers in the Press who fear the second-hand markets, and give the most vivid and vivacious accounts of the trickeries practised by forgers. You have only to copy a Queen Anne suite of furniture, darken it by artificial means, and then pepper it with dust shot, and behold ! you have a genuine antique ! But as the holes made by dust shot are neat and clean and sharp, unlike worm-holes, the forged result is to deceive journalists in need of copy. No other person should be tricked by it—and mention the fact, particularly to his wife.

There have ever been periodical scares about forged works of art, and they have ever done more harm than good. To say over much about a public danger is to excite unnecessary suspicions. Pictures have been condemned as false which were bought from the artists whose names they bore ; and when this fear of forgery becomes endemic, infectious, even connoisseurs are afraid, because their opinions are questioned by persons of no judgment and no training, whose one aim is to make mischief or to attract attention. A fool may set himself up as an expert and do great harm to genuine

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work, if suspicions of forgery are rife in any public market.

At the present time dishonest criticisms are as common as forged pictures and furniture, and collectors fear them much more. But the ordinary householder has no reason to give attention to either of these public evils. Do not be afraid to buy good things at second-hand if their prices are unreasonably low. Look for merit, do not trouble your mind about forgeries, because the false antique furniture is almost certain to be dearer than the honest reproductions made by good manufacturers. Forgers do not exchange their five pound notes for half a sovereign, as certain writers in the Press seem to believe.

Again, what is meant by the expression "genuine old furniture"? Chippendale and his contemporaries issued books of designs for their trade, and these designs were copied not in England only but in France and Holland; it is thus the style, far more often than the work itself, which should be called by the names of Chippendale, Sheraton, Mainwaring, and Hepplewhite.

Now and again a suite of furniture has a quite authentic history, going back to St. Martin's Lane, London, which in the eighteenth century was the headquarters of English art. Chippendale and other cabinet makers lived there, and the Royal Academy was born in St. Martin's Lane. But the main point is that the style should be true and the workmanship thorough. If the style is Sheraton's and the art good, the time and

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place of the actual making concern us little. Indeed, furniture in old English styles by Mr. Christie is all that any householder needs, for it is excellent.

If, then, you decide to hunt for your chairs and cabinets, look particularly for the Victorian replicas of the old English styles; they are often as good as the copies made from books of designs at an earlier period, and I have seen a good many at small prices. They really were cheap—and good.

To sum up. The word cheap, when applied to anything sold at first hand, is wrong, since nothing can be cheap which is sold at its trade value.

CHAPTER III

SYSTEMS OR METHODS OF FURNISHING

THERE are a good many ways in which furniture may be got for a home, and it will be well to review them one by one, so that a fair choice may be given carefully.

A.—*The Hire-Purchasing System*

Let us have faith in the old maxim: "Buy always what you can afford to need and pay for it at once."

What you can afford to *need*, not what you can afford to *desire* or *want*. For there is a very real difference between wants, desires, and needs. Desires and wants stimulate enterprise; they are needs undeveloped. If we desire this or want that, we must strive for it, and have character enough to win it fairly without help from mean shifts and compromises. But when we *need* something we stand at once as choosers between right and wrong; if we call the tune we must pay the piper; needs demand both acts, payment with purchase, because purchase without payment dulls self-respect. Needs are fatal to honour if men trifle with them. The hungry steal, the impulsive run into debt, the ambitious risk their families rather than moderate their schemes.

These reflections belong to the old Puritan spirit,

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which reigned in England from Elizabethan times to the long days and years of Queen Victoria. Then a new industrialism took for its aim the turning of public wants and desires into urgent public needs. Temptations to spend money hurriedly, without feeling at once the full result of that transaction, were held up persuasively in many forms of advertisement. Thrift was looked upon as a foe to business ; and we are now beginning to see that an over-stimulated demand in trade weakens the national character and begets an unrest of mind without will-power. Artificial needs are manufactured by advertisements, and then glutted with cheap commodities and pleasures, from patent medicines to seaside trips. It is time to remember that Debt, Penury, Thriftlessness are three detectives that never fail to strike home.

For these reasons, if you need a hundred pounds-worth of furniture, buy it outright ; do not pay for it in monthly instalments of £2 5s. Business of that kind is without character ; and character is strength and wealth.

Have you read with care the advertisements that boom the hire-purchasing system ? It is worth while, for they talk like popular philanthropists.

Buy always what you can afford to need, and pay for it at once.

But in saying this I do not condemn all the furniture issued by the hire-purchasing system. One firm has equipped nearly 150,000 houses during the last forty years, a long record of business not to be supported by bad

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workmanship ; for people are always exceedingly critical when they pay for things little by little. All systems of "easy payments," so called, breed long after-thoughts ; and hence they need help from free life insurances, free fire policies, and other things not usually connected with buying and selling.

I have dwelt upon this matter for two reasons. A book on furnishing should try to be a guide, and the public should resent the bad methods of advertising which are now so common. Advertisements belong to the cost of production, and the public pays for them ; hence the paymaster should be critical and the advertiser discreet.

B. *The Stock Furnishing System.*

That is to say, you go to a reputable firm and choose what you need from the stock, paying for it immediately. Discount should be asked for and allowed, at least in most cases. This system can be recommended. There are firms in Great Britain that cater for all incomes with judgment and fairness.

One warning may be given here : that persons with moderate incomes should not go to a large furnishing shop until they have definite ideas as to what they need. If they go there with vague ideas, they are certain to buy too much. Draw up a list of things for each room, reduce them to the lowest possible minimum, and do not be tempted to add even one item to the list. Discuss the matter thoroughly, come to

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decisions and be loyal to them. If you decide that four ordinary chairs are enough for your dining-room, do not buy six or eight, a clever salesman charming you with the word "suite," a word which some men and many ladies find irresistible, not understanding that it means a set of no definite number. A suite of chairs may consist of two armchairs and four ordinary ones, if that be the number you want. Indefinite aims account for most bad shopping; there is scarcely a house which has not too much furniture. Small tables are bought in pairs not because they are needed, but because "they match," another phrase that tricks the unwary into spendthrift habits. "It will be useful" is another pit-fall. "Will" implies futurity; and if you have no books and prefer golf to reading, why purchase a book-case on the chance that it will be useful one day? In other words, buy nothing more than you will need daily in your rooms. If this rule were kept in mind and followed, poor families could afford to have furniture such as they would be proud to hand on to their children; for it is the waste of money on too many things that prepares a market for jerry-made inutilities. Cheap pianos are bought by those who cannot play them; and occasional letter-writers give more thought to their bureaus than do journalists and novelists. "How do you like my writing-table?" asks Mr. A., whose hobby is golf, or cricket, or billiards at the club. When persons of this kind furnish a house, the bills are at least one third higher than they need be or should be.

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C. *The Collector's System.*

I have already spoken about this way of furnishing a home. It is amusing, it has many advantages, but even in the hands of experts it is likely to produce a museum rather than a dwelling. I have never known a collector who kept his rooms uncrowded. One buys so many pictures that a great many have to be put in piles against the attic walls; while another has so much costly furniture that you think of the reserves of gold in the Bank of England and feel uncomfortable. There is a real danger in collecting, for (as a rule) it becomes an obsession, a mania. But if you care to run the risks, many a good thing may be purchased at second hand.

D. *The Craftsman's System.*

At the present time there are many artist-craftsman who design special furniture for their clients. Some are well-known architects like Mr. Mervyn Macartney, Mr. Walter Cave, Mr. Charles Spooner, Mr. Baillie Scott, Mr. C. F. A. Voysey, and Mr. R. S. Lorimer; others have their own workshops, like Mr. C. R. Ashbee, Mr. Sidney H. Barnsley, Mr. Ernest W. Gimson, and Mr. A. J. Penty; while one at least—Mr. Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A.—is better known as a great painter. I need not say that it is a delightful honour to have furniture either designed or made by these and other artists; and you will understand that they do not compete against the manufacturers, nor pretend to do work at popular

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prices. We may say of them what William Morris said of the leading members in the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society; namely, that their cultivation of art is an attempt to interest persons of taste by calling special attention to that really most important side of art, the decoration of utilities by furnishing them with genuine artistic finish in place of trade finish. Now all the higher aims of art cost time—indefinite time; no excellent work was ever done in a hurry; and it is only the final result that counts when a creditable piece of work is to be a thing of beauty. As a consequence, if you go to an artist-craftsman for a special suite of furniture, you must give your commission in good time, refrain from hurrying him, and pay the price he is accustomed to receive. It will not be higher than the skill and the labour merit, you may be well assured. The mouldings will be cut by hand, not by machinery, every scrap of wood will be thoroughly seasoned, the polish will not be overdone, and you will have a suite of furniture by a man of name, a Gimson, for instance, whose art is not inferior to Sheraton's or Chippendale's.

Three things in furniture determine both its value and its beauty: fine wood, quiet and good design, and thorough craftsmanship. This last quality may be harmed, and is so frequently, in one of several ways. Sometimes the polishing is bad, and this defect is always serious. In old times a cabinetmaker polished his own work, partly by exposing it to the light till the surfaces darkened and partly by rubbing it with oil and beeswax.

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This method is the earliest and by far the best, but it gave place to a mixture of shellac and naphtha, which, though inferior to the beeswax, formed a lasting polish with a hard surface. The next downward step was the introduction of a French polish, a shiny and detestable thing ; and goodness knows what other abominations are used to-day, bringing trouble into a million households. Who does not know the anxiety of housewives lest hot plates and dishes “ mark ” the tables ?

This example of technique is given here to illustrate the ways in which all artist-craftsmen are called upon to be honest. If they shirk difficulties they save time and lessen the cost of production ; but if they decline to do that, they must needs ask a higher price for their commodities ; and in this we find the real difference between the craftsman’s art and the manufacturer’s trade. An artist makes his own conditions and obtains his own price, while a tradesman cannot do more than his average customer will deem reasonable in price, though his workmen can do better if you commission a special job and state in plain words what you need and must have.

I have now offered for consideration four different methods of furnishing, but there is yet another, namely :

E. The Reproduction Method.

That is to say, you commission a reputable firm to make your furniture in accordance with certain old styles and models. Perhaps you may choose Sheraton for your bedrooms, Chippendale for the dining-room, &c., and

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select definite designs by those masters. Much excellent work has been done in this way. Messrs. Druce & Co. of Baker Street, London, made for me a suite of chairs from a Chippendale model, at a price of 37*s.* for each chair. The workmanship is excellent ; but the wood, of course, has not yet the *patina* given by time, use, and rubbing, and its colour is not yet transparent and rich like that of old furniture. Further, when ordering such replicas, definite instructions should be given and summed up as an agreement, the main points being the following :

1. The wood. The woods mainly used for furniture work are oak, walnut, rosewood, satin-wood, cedar, sycamore, plane, deal, and mahogany. Walnut, with its even texture and its pleasing grain, is very popular. Its colour is improved by age and careful treatment. The Italian variety is grayer than English walnut, it is less subject to the attacks of worms, and it looks charming, but carvers speak of it as brittle. As to mahogany, the Cuba variety is the very best wood in the world for furniture, but its price has become so high that Cuba mahogany is rarely used now except as a veneer and to decorate the surface of cabinets. The mahogany employed to-day comes from Honduras, and is known as Bay Wood. It is more useful than rosewood, its colour being less purple. Finally, remember always that beech, holly, and sycamore, are often stained to resemble both rosewood and walnut.

2. Whether the moulding is to be machine-cut or hand-cut.

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3. The polishing in its relation to different articles. Let the polishes be named and their constituents given. Try to dislike brilliant surfaces because they mirror so many things that the beauty of the wood is obscured.

4. The choice of styles.

There are beautiful styles in furniture which are too elaborate to be in keeping with our simple daily needs. To see them is to know how their design was influenced by rich velvets, beautiful laces, glorious silks, and elaborately pleated ruffs. The best way to study this matter, I believe, is to pass some pleasant hours with "The Mansions of the Olden Times" by Joseph Nash; but after the Stuart reigns we find plenty of furniture from which to choose a style. There is, perhaps, only one exception, and that is the gold and white furniture by Pergolese, a form of art too rococo for England. Sheraton in his decline did some absurd things, but so bad that no sane man would copy them now. He designed with pride a chair composed of a griffin's head, the neck and wings united by a transverse tie of wood, over which a piece of drapery was thrown and tacked behind. The good man made other chairs in which he introduced dogs, lions, camels, dromedaries, and other animals, nor did he seem to know what a poor figure he cut, A.D. 1807.

For the rest, whatever system of furnishing a young couple may decide upon, they must give ample time for their hard and anxious work, which ought really to be finished before they are married.

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What happens, as a rule, is an adventure in hurried last days, hours, and minutes. Engaged couples put aside practical duties, live in islands of dreams, and then try to make up for lost time by wasting it on a flurried gallop in house-keeping. They start with enthusiasm, rushing from one house agent to another, only to be told, with the same chilling politeness, that really they have come to a wrong part of the town.

“Rents are rising here month by month,” the agents say blandly; “this neighbourhood is very select, few lodgings and no cheap flats. If you want such low rents as you name, our advice cannot help you much, because the whole town improves and rents go up as a matter of course. Still, some neighbourhoods are not in fashion, and we’ll look at our books and send you some addresses.”

It is thus that agents form a league with landlords and squeeze the last possible shilling from a tenant’s income. Even the rich are now invited to pay three thousand guineas a year for a *pied-à-terre* in London, just because they may live in splendid flats on a great thoroughfare, and be charmed by the music of motor-cars and ’buses.

But as the pleasures of imagined things are worth cultivating, let us suppose that our engaged couples have found their houses and signed their leases. In three weeks’ time they will be married. Trousseaus have to be finished meanwhile (for these are not left till the last moment, though the long last details may be

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as bad as a demurrage scare in shipbuilding). Yet custom says that a few magical half-hours of thought may yet be found for other important duties, so the actual furnishing is not entirely neglected.

It needs some courage to equip a house in a rapid scampering fashion ; but there are traditions to help us if we wish to experiment. One tradition—and it seems to swallow up all the others—may be mentioned here : Bewilder your mind, dazzle your eyes, and then do the best you can. Surround yourself with catalogues of all sorts and conditions, perhaps a dozen on furniture, another dozen on kitchen utensils, eight or ten on carpets, and so forth ; but to complete the disorder you need a large supply of pattern-books, giving samples of the latest achievements in wall-papers, in textile fabrics, in table linen, and what not besides. Rival manufacturers send you these things partly by request, and partly because your house agent has a kind interest in your welfare and wants a commission from certain firms. At first you are surprised when catalogues arrive, like volunteered contributions to an editor's daily work ; but they help to make a confusion which is quite necessary to failure when a house has to be furnished. If the catalogues and pattern-books are few in number, and time enough is given to master their contents, who can be certain that he will fail ?

CHAPTER IV

TASTE, CHARACTER, AND HOME LIFE

A BOOK might be written on men, women, and their tastes in art. It is a fruitful subject, giving the reasons of many things which everybody notices but which few understand. There is, you will admit, in many matters that affect home life, a steady antagonism between women and men, arising from the fact that to each sex belong some peculiarities of taste which the other does not like, nor is able to accept without a conscious effort and a displayed tact which may provoke opposition, perhaps even some resentment. Every one knows the proverbial young wife who is so eager to improve her husband that she tries "to drop" his old friends and his set habits of thought. Some women, too, after many years of marriage, still believe that their criticism ought to transform a man's taste in dress, in books, in pictures, and teach him to be some one else. One lady was ashamed of her husband because he wrote farcical plays, her own taste being in the direction of *Othello*, *King Lear*, and other tragedies. An artist's wife had a great antipathy against sculpture, and tried during forty years to turn him from that art to the painting of easel-pictures. The man had pupils, who took a boyish

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delight in the comedy of criticism that worried him every day in their presence. At the age of sixty-five he became a very famous sculptor, not without benefit to the art writers in many countries; but his wife remained sceptical, and said with pathos to one of the old-time pupils, "Now, seriously, Jules, is my husband as great as the newspapers say?"

Discords of taste are not always lasting in that thorough way; but they are likely to be so when there is genius either on one side, as in the case of Charles Dickens and his wife, or on both sides, as with Thomas and Mrs. Carlyle. Even when households value their own opinions in a commonplace manner, wall-papers and carpets may be the cause of bad disputes. George Eliot was keenly alive to this fact and said that preferences of taste broke a great many friendships.

We see, then, that although the aim of taste in art is to make Harmony and to form Peace, the quality itself is dogmatic, self-assertive, and quarrelsome: a good soldier that will on and win victories if it can. It is aggressive very often, even in disputes between man and man, where there is commonly some bias of thought peculiar to the male mind; but when the egotisms of a masculine taste clash against the likes and dislikes held and defended by a woman, very unfortunate troubles may arise, above all in homes. For this reason, clearly, taste should be looked at in its relation to sex, and also as the most important difficulty in the art of home-making. That art, as we have seen, should have two

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ideals, Harmony and Peace; but how are these to be made real if women and men have some opposing likes and dislikes which are not acquired, but native to each sex?

There is a connoisseur, a man of great kindness, who is ever busy doing good actions, but whose opinions on the subject of woman's taste are as hard as steel. "A woman's views on art are without value," he says. "Put her into a well-furnished room, give her a free hand, and in a few hours all its character will be gone; for she has no idea of orchestration, but enjoys separated things and effects quite by themselves even when they are in complete opposition to a general scheme. It is for this reason that, although they have often a good taste in music, women cannot write an opera nor compose a fine oratorio. In art, in decoration, we find the same thing—a taste in beautiful fragments needing co-ordination and balanced method."

These are the opinions of one man, but a host of connoisseurs could not make them more pugnacious. They might set by the ears all the households in the United Kingdom. The same views have been held by many writers, and De Quincey summed them up in the assertion that women had no imagination at all. "Where is the female Shakespeare?" it is asked. "Where do we find the fair counterparts of Homer, Plato, Dante, Michelangelo, and the rest?" it is continued. The answer to these combative questions is not far to seek. Shakespeare's mother was greater than her son, for she

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bore him and nursed him ; “ the destiny of a child,” said Napoleon, “ is ever a mother’s work.” There is only one artist whose achievements make every type of society from the earliest to the latest ; and that creator is Motherhood. Napoleon understood this, but most men are so blind to it that they put up monuments to glorify their own sex, instead of raising a cathedral church to the Mothers of England. Even Shakespeare must have a monument, it appears, as though he were not translated into all the educated languages of the world. If we wish to be foolish, let his name be added to the next list of Birthday Honours, so that we may speak of him with pride as Sir William Shakespeare. It is Mary Arden who needs a monument, in Westminster Abbey and in the Poet’s Corner.

Better to hold these opinions than to write in that familiar way which starts a sentence with the word Woman, and then goes on to speak of her as though she had just arrived from another sphere, and deserved to be an object of bemuddled curiosity expressed in headlong epigrams and maxims. Women resent it naturally—and pay off old scores. “ A man’s taste indeed ! What is that ? ” they ask. “ Look into his rooms at college, into his study at home. What he delights in is litter ; yet he talks about method, and balance, and co-ordination, and orchestration, and fiddlesticks. Ask him to make a bouquet or to put flowers in a set of vases, and his eye for colour and arrangement is found to be less educated than that of a girl child at the age of ten or twelve.”

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It is thus that women and men challenge each other in matter of taste. Neither sex, as a rule, is fair to the other, simply because they do not often try to understand that taste has male and female characteristics, inherited age after age, and having their origin not in sex only, but in that historic influence upon sex which the circumstances of life have ever had. To give an example: it has been noticed by many writers that women are by nature more positive and often more practical than men, and this may be confirmed by daily and hourly observation. There are exceptions, no doubt, as among women artists and writers, but not many in a thousand households, I believe. The usual tendency of a woman's mind is to be positive and eminently matter of fact, while men as a rule are speculative and adventurous, and need the discipline of routine and office hours to make them practical. To illustrate this point is easy, and to understand it is not difficult.

A lady lost her husband, a collector, who had filled his home with rare pottery and silver ware. Friends called to condole with the widow, and to one of them she said: "I should be heartbroken were it not that I *must* attend to all these ornaments; they have been a misery to me for many years, but now they are going to be sold, and I shall cease to be their servant." The friend was startled, for the friend was a man, and would not have spoken such thoughts had they come into his mind at such a time. With the woman it was different. Her house had not been a home to her; she had been

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harassed for many years by duties which she did not like, because careless housemaids in a few moments might do irreparable damage to costly works of art; and because her husband had thus compelled her to accept *his* tastes, her own were not affected by his death, but longed to get rid of an old cause of trouble between him and herself. There could be no happy memories of the past until the collection was dispersed. It stood as a barrier between the husband she loved and the connoisseur who had been much of a tyrant; and I like the positive and practical mind which had courage enough to express itself freely in a time of bereavement, instead of acting a part which the friend would have thought admirably sorrowful.

Again, an old farmer and his wife stood by a lake on a beautiful spring evening, and watched a score of golden ducklings at play in the sunset water. "What funny, happy, delightful small fellows!" said the farmer, laughing. "Rogues, too; they ought to be in bed at this hour." "Yes, my dear," replied his wife, "and they'll be early this year for the table." The farmer spoke as a man who had finished the day's work, while his wife did not put aside the cares of her housekeeping, but remained a farmer all day long.

Indeed, it has ever been woman's lot to learn by heart all the hard prose of life. At a time when men were soldiers, sailors, troubadours, crusaders, politicians, speculators of many kinds, she had to stay at home with the household affairs that duty put before her;

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and through good fortune and evil fortune—the latter being more frequent—her office was to manage, to rear children, to control her imagination, to keep her mind alertly positive. A wife's duties day by day, were they written down, would be a long record of practical work in scattered details ; and if bad times come it is upon her that they fall most heavily, not only because she is more sensitively nervous than a man, but also because she has not the ever-changing excitement that attends the struggle for life out of doors. A man acts in public and before an audience ; a woman has her own kingdom, her home, and is often very lonely there. It would be surprising indeed, if she (as a rule) were not positive and matter-of-fact.

Yet the average Englishman believes that women are unstable, wayward, with no capacity for business : and he has many foolish arguments to support his case. He points to the changing fashions of feminine dress, and condemns such vagaries of taste as extravagant and full of mischief. Women might say that about several sporting hobbies followed by men. A pursuit of beauty is as natural to the fair as the pleasures of danger are natural to a sportsman ; and it is also a benefit to mankind, because progress has ever been most rapid in those countries where the grace of women has been such as would have charmed the largest number of men, not in one country only but in all countries. In other words, progress and what may be called a universal type of female beauty have gone hand-in-hand. No

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ugly race has yet made a fine type of society. Ugly races, it is true, till they come in contact with their betters, are beautiful to their own eyes ; but the beauty is never at all magical, like that which inspired the Greek sculptors, and which at different times among other nations has called forth the highest popular ideals. There is not, I believe, a worse sign than a decadence of female beauty ; and decline it does if the family life of a nation becomes unfriendly to it.

We see this in England at the present time among several classes, and the most familiar instance, perhaps, is the history of a pretty servant girl who marries a workman and sets up her home in a dull, grey neighbourhood of mean streets. The contrasts between this shabby life and the luxuries of her domestic service are too violent. The girl longs for the old food and the old furniture, the lost comfort and freedom from care ; her wages, too, are gone, so she cannot dress in the same attractive manner ; everything is changed, degraded ; and after a while you will find her as unkempt as those unhappy townswomen of the poor who seem to pass all their time idly at their doors, grumbling to one another, and screaming orders to neglected children in the street.

A heavy toll has thus to be paid day by day to the war of industrialism. To hunt after profits fiercely is a sport we must follow, but suppose it should harm the genius of comfort ? Comfort is essential to the family life of all classes, for women without comfort are degraded. It is for this reason that I have tried here to point out certain

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habits of mind which, by making women and men unjust to each other, tell strongly in the favour of discomfort and discontent. Unruly egotisms of taste are bad anywhere, but in homes they may be disastrous. What is household life but a theatre for character and taste? Dramas are played there that foretell the future, for in the acts of life, to-day is to-morrow also.

The making of a home is thus a great event, yet it is not generally looked at in a widely social manner. Whenever a man writes about furnishing, he gives what men have evolved for their own guidance; and when women have the same art as their topic they speak as women, as though the other sex had no place at all in the equipment of houses. Some ladies, though, fail to write even with care and tact, preferring to run wild in bad recipes of vulgar taste, like those which in recent times have given us a fashion in "poker work," an epidemic in enamel paint, and a craze for decorated drain-pipes, either covered with varnished Christmas cards and engravings, or painted with bulrushes, or rosebuds, or forget-me-nots. These horrible things stood by the fireside, as well as in narrow entrance halls where visitors bungled against them in the dusk. A friend of mine hurt his knee-cap against one, and a gentle voice said to him from the staircase: "Dear me! is the paint injured?" The next fashion to be encouraged by lady journalists, in their anxiety for the ideal home, might take the form of biscuit tins upholstered with green baize, to make pedestals for caricature

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statuettes of those cabinet ministers who oppose female suffrage.

Architects complain a great deal about the nonsense published in weekly journals by "women decorators," who seem more eager to win commissions from tradesmen than to learn the first principles of decorative art. The drain-pipe era is not unamusing to look back upon, but it did lasting harm in one way, for it unsettled the confidence which men ought to have in the judgment of their wives. There can be no doubt, and I give the reasons on page 13, that a man in his home should subordinate his likes and dislikes to those of his wife, but he remembers now what his own father suffered from that concession when the smell of enamel paint was in vogue, and when pots of flowers stood on drain-pipes in every room. To-day, we have other æsthetic tribulations. Who does not know the *repoussé* metal-work in copper that many daughters turn out with enthusiasm, and that parents try to like, though it gleams at them from a dozen places in a room and annoys the eye? The girl amateur is common everywhere, and her work in the arts and handicrafts has only one exhibition open to it, the home, which in many places becomes crowded with useless things.

The aims of women are thus discredited, and few men even try to understand the difference between their own native tastes and those of the other sex. Roughly speaking, the difference may be put under two categories :

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1. Likes and dislikes of colour.
2. Likes and dislikes of orderliness.

Colour is the subject of the sixth chapter, but some points concerning it must be mentioned here. The colour harmonies that women like, as a rule, are not only brighter than those which men prefer, but rather different in kind, being harmonies of affinity, while the others are harmonies of contrast. In other words, women as a rule enjoy "colours that match," sometimes in hues of one colour, but usually in tints of several colours having the same tone value; while men, if they care for colour at all, prefer bold contrasts that make harmonious effects, as in the following example. It has occurred to artists at various times that walls dis-tempered with black would be a good background in certain large rooms, as in ball-rooms, for the black would be without lustre, and ladies' evening dresses would look uncommonly beautiful against it. But the ladies say: "Black? Could anything be heavier than that? Do you wish us to waltz in a death chamber? The look of black walls would make enjoyment impossible." Still, one architect tried the experiment and got an excellent result. Pretty women never before looked so delightful in their ball-dresses. If some magician had transformed them into stone, into Niobes of happiness, some dancing, and others flirting, England would have had statues more winsome than any which the Greeks achieved.

You see, black is not black when its tone has no lustre

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and when the light and air play upon it. Even the shadows of a black coat are not black, but greyed by atmosphere, and all the lighter parts are full of entertainment to a colourist. Now imagine this atmospheric black as a foil to the rich browns of furniture, to the gold of picture frames, the sparkling wood of a ball-room floor, and the toned cream-white of a moulded dado and frieze; then add to this mental picture the human life and the varied costumes of an evening party, and you have harmonies of contrasts not of affinities.

Then, as regards the likes and dislikes of orderliness, these have given rise to many tiffs between women and men, both sexes being fond of order and disorder. The very woman who is made unhappy by an office table littered with books and papers, will cover her own tables with odds and ends of bric-à-brac, having no value except as objects of association, collected during the holidays. This form of untidiness has helped to make bad servants, and men dislike it, as it is not their own kind of orderly disorder. An office in town, to any lady that happens to see it, is a den of dusty confusion, yet in keeping with male habits of work, for there is method in the confusion. Myself, I like to leave my reference books on my table and open at convenient places, but in the morning I find them closed and stacked in a neat pile; it seems quite a pity to disturb them. Most good women delight "to tidy up," unless that pleasure becomes too familiar, as when authors and artists work at home.

One painter was always at war with a favourite sister

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who wanted to clean his studio. For months at a time he would not give way ; but at long intervals he had a reluctant wish to see friends in the country, and these visits were known as defeats too long postponed. They became more frequent when he got older and peaceful. One day he died, leaving a will, and that sister inherited neither blessings nor bawbees. Her name was not mentioned.

How is a home to be furnished with these peculiar tastes and characters ? and why is it that writers on decorative art give all their attention to the inanimate things in household life ? Not one of them has a word to say about moderation, concession, and compromise—useful and essential arts, without a knowledge of which husbands and wives put themselves at variance with each other. There is no better cure for egotism than tactful concession, and egotism happens to be the fighting element of taste. It forgets that taste and character are infinitely various, and that quarrels over opinions confirm disputants in their own likes and dislikes. A well-known architect gives the following example. He designed a house and submitted his plans and elevations, only to find that his clients had made up their minds to fight over them. The wife wanted sash-windows, while the husband liked case-ments, and neither would give way. What was the architect to do ? He invented a new window, one part of it being a sash and the other part a case-ment ; it was a horrible thing, but it reconciled the

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angry couple, and the architect had a good story to tell.

In art matters, surely, laymen must find it far easier to be wrong than right, yet a special training is not as a rule looked upon as necessary. It is a pity. Art is a long pilgrimage. None can hope to learn much about it, in the brief seasons of our perishable days. Many painters in old age have said: "Would that we might live just a little longer, we have now begun to improve." Lord Leighton, too, went so far as to say that all finished pictures were subjects wasted. Such is the inner modesty that true artists feel: and yet it is accompanied by the strongest egotisms of taste and style. Thus Leighton himself chose a classical style and kept loyal to it all his life, though the ruling methods of art in his time were realistic. Yet his inner modesty had one effect: it made him tolerant and reasonable. His egotism defended his own ideals, but without attacking those of other able men. Something very different from that occurs in home life when tastes are only instinctive, and assert themselves in a quarrelsome manner.

Altogether, then, no house can be furnished with judgment unless the dangers that belong to taste and character are understood by women and men. Three things are essential here: (1) a desire to know the principles of decorative art; (2) a wish to apply them without pedantry; and (3) a kind spirit of compromise. The best homes are those in which a feeling for art is neither cold and formal, nor obvious at a first glance.

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They charm by their quiet air of comfort, and by the way in which they represent their owners' hobbies and personalities. We may say of these homes what many have said about men of genius, for they are partly masculine, partly feminine ; and it is the feminine grace and distinction which give a new value to the male qualities, like the half-look of womanhood in the manly face of Rubens.

CHAPTER V

THE ENGLISH TRADITION

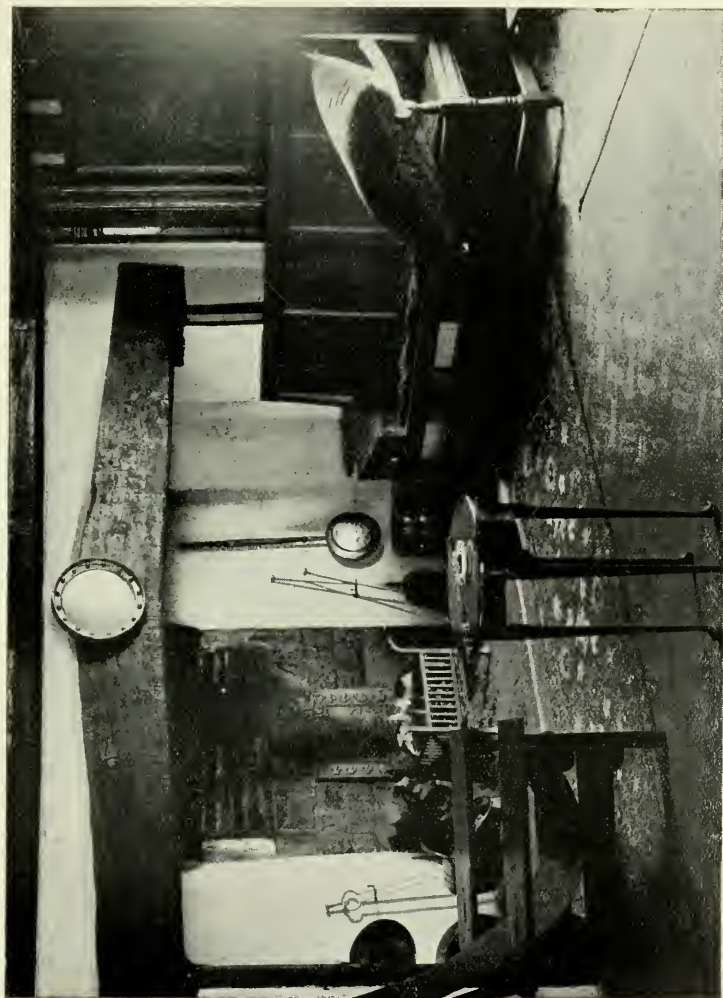
WHAT is tradition in the arts and handicrafts? It has much in common with that family likeness which, despite the change of blood on the female side, persists from generation to generation, and sums up in face and figure the distinctive traits of a family type. Tradition, then, is a legacy handed on from age to age and having peculiar characteristics. These may show themselves either in craft methods or in certain qualities of design which outlive all changes in the technical ways of work. Among primitive men, as in savage tribes to-day, art traditions form settled methods of craftsmanship, and the designs also vary but little, their character displaying only slight alterations over a long span of years. But when savages begin to pass into a higher form of civilisation, they find it wearisome always to repeat the same pattern, so fresh devices are added to the old; and as design comes by designing, like talk by talking, the traditional practice of art becomes richer and richer, not in ornament only, but in the structure and form given to useful things. Progress here is an organic and inevitable growth, like that of a spoken language when new words are added to it by new wants and inventions;

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and we find that whenever the handicrafts are thus evolved by a long tradition undisturbed by fashion, they have invariably a distinctive beauty that enables us to see with pleasure how apt and right the structural methods are. This point ought never to be forgotten, though it often is. All ornament is bad unless it gives value to the practical side of craftsmanship. The purpose to be served by a necessary thing—its use in daily life—is the first consideration, and hence we need ornamented construction, not constructed ornament.

This rule is broken every day by a great many builders; and there are plenty of manufacturers who still believe, despite all the recent talk about “ideal” homes, that bad structural work is good if they overload it with poor ornamentation. It is thus that traditions die out when pretension comes in. All pretension is vulgar; and that a high type of society should be often vulgar in art, while savages never are, is a proof that mankind needs from first to last the discipline of tradition.

This being so, let me explain the difference between constructed ornament, which is bad, and ornamented construction, which is the most necessary tradition in handicraft and design. When a savage decorates a pot, or a boat, or a weapon, he never forgets that his pot is a thing to hold fluids, that his boat must be strong in the water, and his weapon a protection to himself. Civilised man, on the other hand, soon learns to divide his articles



AN EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH FURNISHING : ROOM AT LENHAM COURT, KENT

(By permission of Mrs. A. W. Etam)

The Settle shown in the illustration has a curious fixed smoker's box

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EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH FURNISHING : THE DINING ROOM, OLD
PLACE, SUSSEX

Belonging to the Stuart period

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B. WYLLIE (MESSRS. NEWNES, LTD.)*

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of utility into two classes : those which serve dangerous purposes and those which do not. The former he treats with traditional care, while the latter become the prey of fashions, just because they do not expose men's lives to danger. So we find to-day that while ships, engines, steamers, cannon, rifles, and guns are admirably constructed for their purpose without any deliberate attempt to make them attractive, a great many things in daily household life try to be "artistic" when their first duty is to be useful. One cannot insist too much on this point, because utilitarian methods of work when honest never fail to give results that please the eye, while a conscious effort to be artistic is often vulgar and bad. Ugliness does not appear in any modern article which is well adapted to destroy life or to bear particular risks and perils. All things of this kind are full of traditions, like guns and ships, and their ornament is nothing more than a finish to their structural aptness. Look at a railway engine, a creation as wonderful as any animal in the world. Not only is it a marvel of constructive art, but the history of it shows a gradual evolution from ugly beginnings, for the first locomotives were gaunt, out of proportion, not unlike overgrown boys of fifteen. Motor omnibuses have an uglier ungainliness, because they have grown much too rapidly, and their hurried design is unsuited for our comfort in crowded streets. In comparison with steamers and railway engines, their look is very awkward, ungainly, top-heavy, and immature. Make them better fitted for their purpose and

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those bad qualities will give place to good proportion, which is always attractive.

I have chosen these quite modern examples because Ruskin believed that machinery and steam would not develop in workmanship a comeliness of their own. He was wrong. A fleet of to-day's battleships has a formidable beauty, perhaps even more impressive than the fleets of Trafalgar and the Nile. Not that it is necessary to draw a comparison. The point to be remembered is this: that the beauty of all useful work must spring from practical methods, not from consciously æsthetic aims. It is by doing things well and quietly for given purposes that work develops charm. "Take the large country cart, the body shaped like the waist of a sailing-ship, and every rail and upright unalterably logical, and then decorated by quaint chamferings, the facets of which are made out in brightest paint. Or look at an old table, always with stretching rails at the bottom and framed together with strong tenons and cross-pins into turned posts, but so thoughtfully done that every one is original and all are beautiful." *

It would be easy to give many other good examples, like the coster's barrow and the old Windsor chairs, or like the Berwick fishing smacks and the various canal boats, all logical in structure and beautiful. But you have only to ask yourself three questions when you

* W. R. Lethaby on "Carpenters' Furniture," in "Arts and Crafts Essays," by Members of the Arts and Crafts Society.

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wish to know whether the art in a piece of work is structural and true, or superimposed and false. For what purpose was this thing made? Is it built efficiently for that use? And does the ornament improve the structural lines and forms? If you have any hesitation in answering these questions, the thing is badly made. Further, pattern of all kinds has been so misused during the last sixty years that you should put those questions to yourself whenever you see a bit of ornament. Study the structure and the use of things, and let your criticism be technical and rational. For instance, the purpose of a window is to give light, and Gothic architects in the thirteenth century drew attention to that fact by enriching their windows with tracery, which gave emphasis and charm to pointed openings in a wall; but in later times, towards the close of the next century, the patterned stonework often became too prominent, and sometimes it covered a window, leaving but little space through which light could pass. This was bad art, for the tracery was constructed ornament that deprived the window of its use, when it ought to have been ornamented construction as in thirteenth-century windows. French and German architects erred far more often than our own, particularly during their Flamboyant period, when stone was treated like modelling wax, to be twisted and contorted into fanciful and absurd shapes.

Again, what purpose ought to be served by a chest of drawers in a man's bedroom? That piece of furniture is meant for his clothes; hence the drawers need two

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conveniences : they should be long enough for trousers to lie in them at full length, but they should not be deep, because it is troublesome to find what we need when drawers are deep and packed with clothes. These practical matters occur to boys at school, yet our cabinet-makers rarely notice them. Why? Is bad art not dearer than ordinary common sense? Every one knows the routine chest of drawers, an abomination always, however beautiful the wood and sound the craftsmanship. The drawers are in four tiers and range in depth from about $7\frac{1}{4}$ in. to about $13\frac{1}{4}$ in., though five inches each would be quite enough.

In this example we see how a false tradition may be handed on by a mindless routine of business, which is not sufficiently wideawake to understand the first principles of decorative art. I say decorative art, because in things not associated with that art, as in surgical implements and in sporting materials, English workmanship is admirably thorough to-day, as good as it need be and as useful also. But no sooner does the question of practical use come in touch with the other question of design than mistake after mistake is made with unfailing regularity. Indeed, some manufacturers have won reputations merely by doing well what all should be ashamed to do in a wrong way.

It was very different in England long ago. For many centuries all household things were serviceable and comely ; workmen loved what they had to make, and not only clung with affection to the craft methods

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inherited from their fathers, but passed them on improved to their own children. By this means tradition in styles became a language which young craftsmen learnt as apprentices, and in which they afterwards expressed themselves with more or less of individuality. This went on from the Saxon times to the sixteenth century. Then new influences came from the Italian cities, influences of a Roman Classic nature, which spread throughout Europe, harming all native methods of design. Ideals of style in northern countries became thus affected by southern forms of architecture, till at last—during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—a great many English workmen lost touch with true English ways of work.

Those ways of work were mediæval, and we speak of them as Gothic. All were animated and picturesque; and, being friends to handicrafts that could be used for practical purposes in a fanciful spirit, they encouraged a national affection for gaiety of design. Indeed, Gothic art represents the buoyancy of youthful hope and courage. See how a Gothic cathedral ascends from its foundation, light, eager and strong; it seems to grow upwards to the light and sun, just as trees do; and its beauty is so rhythmic and full of cadence that we think of music petrified into stone, a glorious *Te Deum* in architecture. Aspiring hope is here, and joy in life and work; even humour is not forgotten in the details of church building, many gargoyles being as funnily fantastic as Rabelais.

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In Gothic homes, as many records prove, the romance element in design went hand in hand with a naïve fondness for bright garden colours. Art was a perennial springtime which every one enjoyed. Henry III. did not think it beneath his dignity to watch over the decoration of a wall, to give detailed instructions for the making of tiles, floors, wainscots, staircases, draught-screens, tapestries, and arrangements of colour; these were joys to be taken seriously, as we take sports and pastimes.

Such was the mediæval tradition. You will find in the Print Room at the British Museum several thousand pencil drawings by William Twopeny, which give a history of England's home architecture from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. All are good, for they represent work that still existed during the early decades of the nineteenth century; and there is not one among them but illustrates the happy and thorough character of mediæval methods, the joy of doing well what has to be done for a given purpose.

But this tradition of Gothic art does not belong exclusively to England, so we must look for other and more national traits; and these may be met with in a steadiness of purpose, a wish to be strong, and a dislike for over-elaborated detail. England was a colonist in her arts, invading many foreign styles, but she conquered what she took and made it her own. Thus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries she imported much cabinet work from the Netherlands, and then gave it a new character with more refined mouldings, with a

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simplicity at once quieter and richer. Turning, a delightful old Saxon art, half for convenience, half for beauty, helped in this good work ; and then there were inlays of walnut, and cherry-wood, and ebony, and ivory ; not inlays such as we are given now in most furniture, but unaffected and quietly harmonious.

We have seen thus far that the English tradition has six characteristics.

1. Joy in work for its own sake.
2. Delight in picturesque styles that denote happiness.
3. Steadfastness of purpose and thorough workmanship.
4. Reserve, disciplined self-control, not coldly austere, but refined and sympathetic.

5. The subordination of ornament to the utility of household things.

6. Elegance with strength—a characteristic to be found in all good English work, from the finest architecture to the humble barges on the Thames.

These qualities ought still to be national. But to what extent are we loyal to them ? Suppose this question were put to us at a State examination as general as a national Census ; and suppose, too, that we all promised under oath to tell the truth. Well, how many feel joy when they work ? love picturesque styles ? are resolute and firm in purpose ? practise a thorough self-control ? and hate furniture which is not well adapted for daily use, or in which there is either a smug attempt to be “polished” and “artistic,” or a fussy parade of ornament ?

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One thing is certainly beyond doubt: the English tradition is no longer what it used to be, nor is it improved by the changes through which it has passed. We have become so unused to thorough work that the word "artistic" is applied to everything at all pleasant to look at. There is now an outcry for "artistic" telegraph poles, when we need nothing more than well-shaped poles which any good craftsman would design as a matter of course. As telegraph poles are essential we can afford to make them well. Again, consider the first necessary object that meets your eye in a room—*i.e.*, the fireplace. How often is it even moderately good in small houses and flats? As a rule, there are coloured tiles, not only bad in colour but covered with ugly patterns; the tongs and pokers are too commercial to be practical, so there is no charm in their workmanship; and around the chimneypiece are panels of bad ornament, as though vacant spaces were not more restful for the eye to look upon. It is false decorative art everywhere, and the more unsightly because it is pretentious. Those patterned tiles are an insult to a tenant, because plain-tinted tiles would be better for his comfort and less expensive for the landlord to buy.

Insults to common sense are to be found in most small houses and flats. A good door-knocker is not expensive, but how many good ones do you know? At one time brass door-knockers were in general use, or nearly so in towns; their shapes were varied and pleasing, and their brightness gave a hospitable look to

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EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH FURNISHING: GEORGE III'S BEDSTEAD
 In the State Bedroom at Goodwood House, Sussex. A typical XVIII. century
 bedstead, with fine carved posts in the Chippendale manner

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 Messrs. NEWNES, Ltd., and written by F. FENN and B. WYLLIE*



EXAMPLE OF OLD-ENGLISH FURNITURE: THE KING'S ROOM, OXBURGH
HALL, NORFOLK

The King's Room (so called because Henry VII. occupied it in 1487) is in the gateway tower, and is a singularly beautiful example of a domestic interior. The walls have the linen-fold pattern in the panelling, and curious old tapestry above. The fine carved oak bedstead has a coverlet and curtains of green velvet, embroidered with various birds and beasts. This embroidery is said to be the work of Mary, Queen of Scots.

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houses. Then the demon of false economy came to speculative builders, and door-knockers of cast-iron were hastily invented, everything about them being cheap and poor. Wrought iron would have been far and away better, but think of the blacksmith's wages. Why should money be put into attractive work when tenants do not mind the many insults thrown at them by uneducated builders?

Speaking generally, for exceptions do not spoil an argument, there is a want of sobriety in modern decorative work. "As a people," says Mr. Reginald Blomfield, an architect of genius, "we rather pride ourselves on the resolute suppression of a florid display of feeling, but art in this country is so completely divorced from everyday existence, that it never seems to occur to an Englishman to import some of this fine insular quality into his daily surroundings." Can this fact be explained? Do we owe it to the constant misuse of noisy headlines in a multitude of newspapers? Is the public mind vitiated by the popular Press. A fussy pretension certainly rules there. Quite ordinary events are "startling"; simple good work is "ideal" work for "ideal" homes; the nation is being trained to think in the language of advertisements.

It seems to me that the manner of English ladies and gentlemen has the best qualities which an English home ought to have, refined tact, kindness, sympathy, strength, and a well-bred quietness and repose. These qualities may go hand-in-hand with any style of house-

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hold art, from the simplest panelling to the patterned liveliness of William Morris.

A quiet manner is entirely different from austere coldness. Through a popular misunderstanding on this point, writers on decorative art have been ridiculed, and their good work has gone for nothing. "We are asked to make our rooms cold and formal," householders say, and raise their eyebrows in sneering amusement. On the contrary, you are asked to make them peaceful and well-bred ; and this they can be in many styles. Hints can be borrowed ; there is charm in all the best work which has been done in England from mediæval times to our own leading craftsmen. Make friends, then, with the English tradition ; be national in your taste and you cannot then be wrong.

CHAPTER VI

ON COLOUR

A. *The Durability of Colours*

HOUSEHOLDERS ought to have a general idea of the way in which coloured papers and fabrics are affected by the daily action of light. I am writing this chapter away from home, and my room has a wall-paper which at one time was rather a gay red, but an unequal distribution of light has bleached it into several unpleasant tints of terra cotta, the most offensive hue that red can have in decoration. Behind the window-curtains the original colour remains, a thin-toned, brightish red, such as may be met with in a great many "apartments." The manufacturer added a touch of carmine to his bad taste, and carmine, after being exposed to the light for about eighteen months, vanishes completely where the light is strong and steady, and fades deplorably in shaded parts of a room. Direct sunlight hastens this bleaching process, and no housewife is well pleased to watch the results week by week.

Carmine, too, is not the only ghost-colour among the popular gay reds. Crimson lake is another, purple madder comes next in the ease with which it disappears, but is followed immediately by scarlet lake. Ghosts

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are said to feel some pity for themselves after daybreak, when their own little brilliance has to go out at the bidding of the sun ; and these reds are like apparitions of the dawn, splendid and evanescent.

The reds having permanency enough to be useful in household art—these should be remembered, and the following list shows them in their order of merit so far as their stability is concerned :

Burnt Sienna.
Venetian Red.
Indian Red.
Vermilion.
Madder Lake.
Rose Madder.
Purple Carmine.
Violet Carmine.

Vermilion, you will recollect, is so vividly brilliant that it should not be used except as an occasional point of colour up to which a scheme of decoration must be led with skill. Vermilion dominates wherever it is put, and large patches of it tire the eyes even more than emerald green will do, if you boldly give it a chance. But George Morland, a colourist by nature, used to say that a vivid spot of red should be repeated in a picture, and you will find that he made use of vermilion glazed with rose madder, as a rule, or with madder lake. Pure vermilion gives a point in some of his paintings, as in a shawl around a woman's shoulders,

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but this happens only when the figure is small and the surrounding colours are favourable. Vermilion against snow looks well, and among fields of corn it is delightful in spots happily placed. In old times chairs were sometimes painted with vermilion and white, the red being used as a telling relief on the white.

The other reds in my list are all good and useful. Burnt sienna and black in equal quantities, with just a little raw sienna to give transparency, make a very fine brown, deep and rich ; it looks admirable in etchings. Householders might use it for kitchen doors and for other purposes too. It would go well with oak furniture in a man's room, with a good tint of common brown paper for the walls, preferably one in which a yellow hue is broken up by a darker colour. Many good qualities are to be found in ordinary wrapping papers ; qualities of broken tint and uneven texture.

Venetian red and Indian red mix well with several pigments, but they need a good eye for colour, and in this they are like the Pompeian red which the Romans loved in their villas and town houses. When used in those narrow entrance halls which get a dim light from fan-shaped windows above the doors, all red tints should be "flatted," without lustre ; and those which have a faded look, like the reds at Pompeii, are usually best. But the difference between good hues and bad is very subtle. It is affected in many ways, as by the size and shape of rooms, and the quantity of light received by

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colours *in situ* ; hence no recipe guidance can be given here. I have seen dark entrance halls in red which were charming, but if the tint used in one were transferred to another the effect might be very unpleasant. This matter is like the use of good adjectives in wrong places. Still, Venetian red and Indian red are colours to be remembered ; the necessary thing is to use them with judgment for given places and purposes. Recipes of colour are made by conditions, and each recipe belongs to the conditions that formed it.

The most delightful reds in a room are those in which the deep rose tints enter ; colourists speak of them as ruby lakes and reds ; and my list gives the only safe pigments with which they can be *invented*, each good tint being an invention, a creation. Rose madder and madder lake are noble servants to a colourist, and much may be done with purple carmine and violet carmine. With these you may work with safety ; and having this knowledge you will not buy wall-papers without a guarantee as to the dye-stuffs used in their manufacture.

Blues have many qualities. The most stable under the physical effects of light are ultramarine, French blue, cobalt, Prussian blue, Antwerp blue, permanent blue, and indigo, arranged in the order of their stability ; but indigo is a permanent colour in good processes of dyeing. Then, as to the yellows, three are durable: lemon yellow, chrome yellow, and yellow ochre ; two are servants of the second class : cadmium yellow and Indian yellow ;

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gamboge has a doubtful character and a pleasant air of utility ; while Naples yellow keeps the bad character which that city had during the Renaissance.

Greens are emblems of Nature's steadfastness, but some among them are not quite loyal to their duty, for olive-green has the seventh place among the fleeting pigments sold by colourmen, and emerald green occupies the twenty-fifth. It is a pity the places are not reversed, because olive-green is an attractive pigment, while emerald is a hazardous colour in decorative art, requiring as much skill and care as vermilion. Terra verte is the safest green on a palette, but many permanent ones may be made with the best blues and yellows.

This information is based on the authoritative verdict passed on colours by a Commission of Experts. Rather more than twenty years ago there was a belief that the pigments used in water-colour painting were not durable, so in April 1886, the question was taken up by the Council on Education, a committee of experts was appointed, and a thorough series of experiments tested the action of light on water-colour drawings. The result was made known in March 1888, and proved, of course, that pigments in water-colour were neither more nor less durable than the materials with which they were made. Painters had known for many years that colours were variously stable and unstable, but the Committee of Investigation went beyond that knowledge, showing the order of instability of the single

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colours employed by artists. And this ought to be useful to householders, because textile fabrics and wall-papers are subject to the same conditions as pictures are influenced by, in rooms and in galleries. As a rule direct sunlight does not touch them; it is reflected sunlight from the clouds that we get in most rooms. Every kind of light was considered by the Committee, and tested thoroughly by photometric experiments, and the pigments received a total illumination equivalent to 10,800 hours of average blue sky.

The most valuable set of experiments from a household point of view lasted from August 14, 1886, to March 1888, during which time colours were exposed to the light. Each pigment was put in superimposed washes on Whatman paper, eight washes in all, giving a scale of tints from one to eight. The paper was then cut into a couple of slips measuring 8 in. long and 2 in. wide; these were placed in a glass tube open at both ends, and the lower slip was protected from the light by a piece of American cloth fastened around the tube. Consequently one slip gave the effect of light on a colour, while the other kept the original tint as a standard by which to judge the colour's durability. Thirty-nine pigments were tested in this thorough way; thirteen showed no change, thirteen were good, though they faded in varied degrees, while thirteen gave very poor results, some vanishing entirely. These are the colours that householders should be on their guard against; and neither time nor space will be lost if I

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mention them again. Here they are in the order of their instability :

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Carmine. | 8. Indigo. |
| 2. Crimson Lake. | 9. Brown Madder. |
| 3. Purple Madder. | 10. Gamboge. |
| 4. Scarlet Lake. | 11. Vandyke Brown. |
| 5. Payne's Grey. | 12. Brown Pink. |
| 6. Naples Yellow. | 13. Indian Yellow. |
| 7. Olive Green. | |

As the experiments were very searching, unlike the tests to which colours are subject in the usual light of rooms, it is not necessary to condemn all those pigments ; but the first six ought not to be used. The others are serviceable at times, particularly indigo, which, like woad, is an essential dye-stuff.

It will be remembered that the art of dyeing textile fabrics was an ancient art when Pliny wrote about it in the first century A.D., yet it is young and fresh to-day when treated as an art. Charles Lamb once complained that owing to the progress of science the stars had become merely astronomical. Science, too, by deducing the aniline dyes from the plants of the coal-measures, has interfered with our enjoyment of colour, for aniline dyes are (for the most part) merely commercial. They have been improved in recent years, no doubt, particularly the yellows and the lakes ; they last much longer than they did, but their general tone is not pleasant in the bulk of the work done with them. It is never a fine

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tone, though sometimes it may be good of its kind. The aniline dyes are industrial servants, while the old dye-stuffs are friends to the art of exquisite colour ; and this distinction is one that householders should test for themselves by comparing the old dyes with the new. Some manufacturers are to this day loyal to the ancient methods and materials, for it is not possible that every one should be duped by inferior wares. There are persons who still believe that silk weighted with chemicals has no value, and that textile fabrics for home use are more economical when they are not dyed with aniline mixtures. Bulk may be essential in trade, but you cannot get art if you do not appreciate the finer traits of beauty.

It is a question of choice. Weighted silk is manufactured by the ton, more than half of it being chemicals ; fabrics stained with aniline dyes are spoiling the native Indian handicrafts and winning for themselves a trade in all parts of the world ; but if we want something better, something true and good, we must encourage the few tradesmen who sell pure silk, and textiles dyed with beautiful sweet colours.

Dye-stuffs did not change at all for an incalculable number of years. They formed an art so conservative that it linked the eighteenth century with the earliest times of the ancient civilisations. Then American dyewoods began to arrive, logwood and Brazil-wood adding useful reds to those which were obtained from other trees, such as the Red Saunders, imported from Asia

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and from Africa also. Cochineal, the American insect dye, was less useful, because it ousted the king of red dyes, kermes, a European insect found on several species of oak near the Mediterranean. The American quercitron bark came next, giving a serviceable yellow dye, not so pretty as weld, wild mignonette, but pleasing, like old fustic, another American dye-wood. Weld is the prettiest yellow in the world for silk, and its colour is tender and good in other materials. Yellows may be got from heather, birch, saw-wort, osier twigs, dyers' broom, and poplar twigs, but yellow dyes are the least permanent of all, speaking generally. As a proof of this for instance, William Morris drew attention to the old tapestries, in which the greens have always faded more than the reds and blues, even the best yellow dyes losing their brighter shade, the lemon colour, and leaving only a residuum of brownish-yellow, which makes a pleasant kind of half-green over the blue. Hence it is well to remember that yellows in textile fabrics are not strictly permanent, however carefully the dyeing is carried out.

Blue is obtained from woad and indigo, which have the same chemical properties and give the same colour. To get green is a double process : first a piece of material is put in the indigo-vat, where it is dyed to the requisite tint of blue ; then with a good yellow dye, like weld, the ground tint is greened, and some madder may be added to modify the colour. Still, it is not necessary to enter further into these technical matters, because they do not form the real point of my argument. The real point is

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that the best dyes are got from woods, plants, and insects ; some need a mordant, others do not ; and all, in the hands of a good craftsman, give bright colours which are beautiful. They do fade out of being, but gradually, and for the most part charmingly, keeping to the last a pure tone, very different from the livid hues through which the aniline dyes often pass in their popular life.

B. *Colour and Colours.*

Artists speak of “ a good eye for colour.” What do they mean by that phrase ? The percentage of persons who are colour-blind is small, yet artists lay particular stress on the quality of good colour even in the work of eminent painters. This proves that although an appreciation for colour is a natural gift to mankind, yet the perfection of that gift is rare even among those who cultivate it ; and this fact should be remembered by householders, who pride themselves overmuch on their many-hued decorations.

The truth is that they do not understand the artistic difference between colour and colours. Perhaps ninety-nine persons in a hundred are fond of colours ; and this enjoyment is so refreshing to the mind and spirit that gardens and flowers have become necessary to our daily life ; even the poorest dwellers in a city tend plants with care, and buy in the spring little penny bunches of daffodils, primroses, and violets. Artificial flowers are prized by many, and what wall-paper is not welcomed if it reminds the poor of birds and gardens ?

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Joy in the witchery of colours being so natural and so general, we need not be surprised that it is often mistaken for something more important, namely, a good eye for colour—a thing as remarkable in art as composition is in music. Colours are like musical notes and chords, while colour is a pleasing result of their artistic use in a combined way. So colours are means to an end, while colour is the end itself. The first are tools, while the other is a distinctive harmony in art composed of many hues and shades.

Such harmonies are of two sorts—the *good* and the *fine*. A great many painters are known for their good colour, and each of them has a distinction of his own, for colour is varied in a personal manner like the timbre of the human voice. No two persons have ever seen in colours precisely the same hues; and so we find that when painters not only use the same pigments, but work from the same model, their colour effects differ invariably, just as voices differ from each other when they repeat from the same book or poem the same words. It is for this reason that colour has been called the voice of art, and experts say with truth that it is the one characteristic which forgers cannot imitate with success, because they, too, have a colour of their own which a trained eye can detect at once.

Again, when we pass from the many artists who have the gift of “good paint,” we meet with a few rare spirits in art whose colour is so fine that its varied brilliance and purity are as exceptional as great tenor voices.

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More than that may be said with figurative truth. Some pictures are like song and orchestra combined, and among them I will place a great Titian in our National Gallery, the *Bacchus and Ariadne*. It has been described many times, but Charles Lamb's reading is the most imaginative, while Reynolds and Burnet write as painters on the technical mastery shown by Titian in his artistic colour. The first point to be noted is the mystery of grey and tinted light. A great colourist is a magician in his use of greys, some cold as stone, others warm as the tints in summer clouds, and others iridescent like pearls. When the greys are pure and fine, the half-tones in a picture, whether cold or warm, fall into place one by one, and splendid plots of light and shade come into the general atmosphere and complete the harmony. Greys, then, in all that appertains to colour, whether in pictures or in rooms, are essential peacemakers.

Here is one very helpful thing to know thoroughly, and several others, as useful to householders, may be learnt from the *Bacchus and Ariadne*. You will find, for example, that colours warm and cold are balanced with astonishing success, and that every passage of colour is by itself beautiful and filled with atmosphere. Pure pigment does not appear at all; the splendour throughout is greyed and toned by air, and light, and the juxtaposition of hues. The colour seems to be nature's, but in truth it is artistic colour and Titian's own. As to the bearing of this point on room

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decoration, you will note that warm and cold colours must form harmonious contrasts, and that the colours must not be positive, because the aim of art is to employ atmospheric hues of colour in a personal and distinctive way.

Before we go further, and take a more detailed survey of Titian's picture, it will be well to define some technical terms. What is the meaning of "warm" in its relation to colours? and what is the meaning of "cold"?

Of the three primaries, yellow, red, and blue, two are *warm* colours, red and yellow, while the other is *cold*; and these terms are in sympathy with the colours, giving their peculiar effects on the eye and the mind. Yellow and red are more or less ardent; even children know them as symbols of fire and heat. To us, under certain conditions, they are emblems also of other things, the yellow of nearness and the red of triumph. A poppy in a field of corn triumphs, and the greyish-yellow corn looks near on a far horizon. Blue, on the other hand, is a cold tint that denotes atmosphere and space, being associated with distant views and the sky. Laymen are apt to forget this, particularly when they put sky-blue paper on a wall, a wrong use of a pleasant, ærial tint because the first duty of a wall is to look firm and solid, and therefore unlike pale blue.

The primary colours form three secondaries:

Blue and yellow = green.

Red and yellow = orange.

Red and blue = purple.

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Green is a cold colour if the blue and yellow are in equal proportions or if the blue is in excess of the yellow. But as every approach towards yellow and red is a step towards warmth and brightness, many hues of russet green and yellow green give mild sensations of light and heat. This applies above all to yellow greens, because yellow gives a greater idea of warmth than red, with a touch of which russet greens are made. The coldest greens are those which are flattened and saddened by white pigment; these are dangerous in room decoration, particularly in the lighter tints. Yet it is no uncommon thing to see doors and furniture painted in light hues of green that try to imitate the pale greens of springtime. Could anything be more absurd? It shows that a good many persons do not yet understand why light and vivid greens are not unpleasant out of doors in April and May. The reason is that they are made infinitely varied by sunlight, shadow, mist, distance, and greys innumerable. Even so they are feared by landscape painters; and hence it is sheer folly to choose any tint of pale green for our furniture and woodwork. It is nothing but paint, flat, cold, staring, and altogether in bad taste. No person with an eye for colour would employ green in that way. But green may be used in homes when it is dark and rich-toned; and so we get two principles which ought to be learnt by heart:

(1) Pale and vivid greens are out of place in room decoration, above all in furniture and woodwork. Years ago Minton put an emerald green border to

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plates, but the effect even here was bad. Emerald, indeed, is like a discord in music, which composers drop in with good effect as an occasional surprise.

(2) Dark rich greens, warm in tone, yet cold in comparison with lake and deep transparent brown, are very useful indoors, particularly for table-cloths, window curtains, and a ground upon which fine Eastern rugs may be laid. Such greens go admirably with most good arrangements of colour, as in the following example :

(a) A flock wall-paper, the local tint of which was ruby red, but varied by a Venetian pattern in relief and in a lake tint of the same beautiful red. The pattern, of course, was a formal design that kept its place on the wall, making a good background with a broken surface.

(b) Fine English pictures in gold frames, but the gold was not new and staring.

(c) Rich brown furniture by Chippendale.

(d) A white marble fireplace by Flaxman, with dark green tiles in the recess.

(e) A cornice and ceiling of Flaxman's period, not dead white in colour, but cream-tinted and warm.

(f) Dark-green window curtains against the light, the room having windows on one wall only.

(g) A dark-green cover over the dining-room table, not only restful to the eye, but necessary, for it prevented the light from being reflected over a large flat surface of polished wood. A blue cloth would have been too cold, and brown would have destroyed the value of that colour in the furniture.

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(h) The chairs were upholstered in a peculiar ruby-tinted leather which did not attract too much attention.

(i) The carpet, quiet and formal in design, had warm and cool tints that repeated the principal colours in the room and yet kept its place unobtrusively.

(j) The door was dark-green, and the rest of the woodwork also.

The general effect delighted every one, and many artists spoke of it as "fine colour." But remark how the harmony was obtained. The cold tints were not too cold, and the warm were rich in tone and unassertive. Those which dominated the scheme, the ruby reds, the browns, the deep olive greens, were repeated in different parts of the room; and no contrastive harmony, as between the red and gold, and the green and red, was spoilt by a wrong hue in either colour. The coldest and the brightest tints were in the pictures, and here, of course, they had their atmosphere of art. This the owner of the house remembered when the room was furnished; and he did not forget that his scheme would be completed by vases of flowers, by the table ware, by ladies in their evening dresses, and by the black worn by men. In other words, the room had to be charming at all hours of the day.

And now let us hear what Sir Joshua Reynolds has to say on this very subject. He lays it down as a general principle "that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm mellow colour, yellow, red, or yellowish-white; and that the blue, the gray, or the

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green colours be kept always entirely out of these masses, and be used only to support and set off these warm colours; and for this purpose a small proportion of cold colours will be sufficient. Let this conduct be reversed; let the light be cold, and the surrounding colour warm, as we often see in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters, and it will be out of the power of art, even in the hands of Rubens and Titian, to make a picture splendid and harmonious."

You will, I hope, read this quotation several times till you know the two general principles contained in it. These may be summed up in another passage from Reynolds.

"The predominant colours of a picture ought to be of a warm mellow kind, red or yellow; and no more cold colour should be introduced than will be just enough to serve as a ground or foil to set off and give value to the mellow colours; and never should itself be a principal. For this purpose a quarter of the picture will be sufficient; those cold colours, whether blue, gray, or green, are to be dispersed about the ground or surrounding parts of the picture, wherever it has the appearance of wanting such a foil, but sparingly employed in the masses of light."

Now a room is a picture: it has a background, the walls with the windows, the door, and the frieze and cornice; a middle distance, where the furniture stands; and a foreground—*i.e.*, the family life, to which all should be subordinated. It lacks only one thing which

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a picture has frequently, and that is the charm of distant perspectives. We have thus to remember the limits within which a room is confined. The walls are flat and upright, and no decoration must make them look unsubstantial and unsteady. The floor is meant to be walked upon, therefore its covering must not resemble a flower garden nor be filled with birds and animals, since no one would walk upon such things in real life. Thus the picture which a room should present, or *must* present, is conventional both in its background and in its middle distance ; the only realism permitted is in a few well-placed vases of flowers and in the human life that peoples the foreground. You will say, perhaps, that the paintings hung on the walls are realistic, but only in a way subordinate to art, and art has conventions of its own.

If, now, you think of an empty room as a bare canvas on which you have to make a picture in accord with the limits of your conventional art, how would you apply the principles which Reynolds has given? Reynolds helps you to answer this question by his criticisms on Titian's picture of *Bacchus and Ariadne*.

“The conduct of Titian in this picture,” says Reynolds, “has been much celebrated, and justly, for the harmony of colouring. To Ariadne is given (say the critics) a red scarf, to relieve the figure from the sea, which is behind her. It is not for that reason alone, but for another of much greater consequence ; for the sake of the general harmony and effect of the picture.

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'The figure of Ariadne is separated from the great group, and is dressed in blue, which, added to the colour of the sea, makes that quantity of cold colour which Titian thought necessary for the support and brilliancy of the great group ; which group is composed, with very little exception, entirely of mellow colours. But as the picture in this case would be divided into two distinct parts, one half cold, and the other warm, it was necessary to carry some of the mellow colours of the great group into the cold part of the picture, and a part of the cold into the great group ; accordingly Titian gave Ariadne a red scarf, and to one of the Bacchante a little blue drapery.'

This, no doubt, is excellent criticism, and it will help you to understand the dining-room which I have described. The principle involved is precisely the same. If warm colours ruled everywhere they would be wearisome ; and yet they ought to predominate. The problem, therefore, is to find precisely those tints of cold colour which do not clash with the warm and mellow, but support them and set them off by contrast. Titian used blue for this purpose, and repeated it with masterly judgment, for the blue of the sky is carried into the foreground, where some blue flowers grow, as well as into the female figure mentioned by Reynolds. Yet this repetition of blue needed for its support a peacemaker with certain qualities, neither cold nor warm, but temperate : hence the greens that Titian created for the distance and the trees, for grass at the

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bottom of his picture, and for wreaths of vine tendrils around the loins of a dancing male figure behind Bacchus. Then, between Ariadne and the great group, in the foreground, is a black dog with white feet, so strong in tone that the eye rests upon it as a matter of course, and feels with enjoyment the way in which the black sets off the dark flesh tones of the sunburnt Bacchus, the browns of the tree trunks, and the inimitable leopards. All the flesh tints are exquisite, and in keeping with the many artistic colours that surround them with joyous contrasts.

In that dining-room (pp. 81-2) the ruling colours were ruby reds and rich browns and gold frames; these rich hues were repeated, only in a quiet and formal way, by tints in a good carpet; the repetition of dark greens gave necessary cool passages of colour, while the marble fireplace and the plaster ceiling were sufficiently warm in their white tints to act as the greens do in Titian's picture.

Reynolds, so critics say, overstated his useful principle when he said that cold light and colour, even in the hands of a Rubens or a Titian, could not make fine harmonies. He knew that there were exceptions to this rule, not in nature only, but in several pictures also: but he was writing for students, who waste much time in perilous experiments, so he put the exceptions aside, not without reason.

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C. The Juxtaposition of Colours.

When hints on room decoration are offered to householders, and to ladies in particular, experts find that their practical knowledge is rebuffed. "We should not like that," the amateurs say point-blank and without a moment's thought. "That colour would be horrid," is another stock expression. "We don't wish our rooms to look small," they continue, not caring what their remarks may seem to the unlucky expert who has to encounter the same opposition daily. There is no confidence in the world equal to that of a person who does not know, unless we look for its counterpart in another such person; and the essential thing which householders do not know, and never try to learn, is the effect which one colour has upon another. Suggest a tint for a wall-paper, and it is criticised by itself, and not in relation to all the other colours to be used in the room. This being so, what principles govern the juxtaposition of tints?

The first point to be noted is the particular form of juxtaposition in furnished houses. One colour stands out from another, but between them, as a rule, there is some space, and spaces mean varied degrees of grey atmosphere. For example, several yards separate your dining-room table from the window curtains; the table cover and the curtains may be of the same uniform tint, but if you stand away from the table and look at the cover as relieved against the curtains, you will find

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that the latter seem of a different colour. This result is one of atmosphere. It follows, then, that the same hue of colour may be used with different variations of effect. Now, as the principal tints ought to be repeated in a composition, and with something of that art which Titian displayed in his blues, greens, and reds, we should try at all points to lessen our risk of failure ; and it is certainly better to repeat the same colour, leaving distance and atmosphere to vary the tint, than to modify the colour itself in order to give variety to the repetitions. This rule is one of safety. A painter has to supply his own atmosphere, and his work lies on a flat surface ; while we have a whole room in which to perfect a scheme, aided by the enchantment that distances lend to form and colour.

And here is another hint. Take some pieces of blue linen or cloth, some in good tints and others in bad ; spread them out flat on a mahogany table, and you will find that even coarse metallic blues look quite well. This juxtaposition of blue and brown is a peacemaker, a useful thing to know in these days of aniline dyes, which have a tendency to be hard and sharp and unpleasant.

Mahogany has the power of toning unpleasant greens as well as metallic, hard blues, so that we may choose without difficulty a colour for the afternoon teacloth, the tea service itself, a strip of felt to protect the sideboard, and other details, such as a mat upon which a flower-pot may stand on any brown article of furniture.

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It is easy to make experiments on your dining-room table, which gives you the colour of your furniture. Try on it, one by one, samples of wall papers, patterns for curtains, and the like ; choose those which make the best harmonies, and then put your whole selection side by side on the table, and see whether the different materials look well together when you stand at different distances from them. The result being satisfactory, the materials should then be got in lengths to be tested *in situ*. That is, a length of paper should be pinned to the wall, place near to it the curtain material, and bring in contact with them a strip of carpet and a piece of furniture ; then study the effect from the other end of the room, taking care to look through a hole made by arching your hands, so that no sensation of colour may reach you from other parts of the room. It is necessary that you should see nothing more than the principal colours which you have tentatively chosen.

Once more, as a training for the eye, many experiments may be made both with fruits and flowers and with pieces of paper. You need a background for the flowers and fruits, preferably good papers in plain tints. Choose one you like, pin it to a board, and then try how various arrangements of flowers with fruits tell against it. Many backgrounds can be tried with each experiment, and the knowledge gained will surprise and delight you. *All the beauty of colour depends on the opposition of tints ;* and all the ugliness too. Thus, for example, orange is not an unpleasant colour, neither is

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blue ; but orange when opposed *to* blue offends the eye, for it makes the blue look more intense, and the contrast becomes too searching, too startling. In like manner, orange opposed *by* blue—that is, orange against a blue background—appears of a richer tint, and the contrast between the two is inartistic. Red and yellow, contrasted with their respective complemental colours, green and purple, are made to appear more intense, though there is, of course, no actual change in them, the increased brilliancy of hue arising from the effect which their juxtaposition has on the optic nerve.

Take three scraps of paper coloured with brown madder, all of the same tint, and place them on different backgrounds, one orange, the other emerald green, and the third purple. Orange is the complemental colour of blue, and you will find that the brown madder appears of a bluer tint than when seen by itself. Why ? Because the yellow and red in the orange background, by their superior brightness and power, absorb the more feeble rays of those colours in the brown madder, causing the blue rays to be more apparent. To give brown madder a yellower or a redder hue, we change the background to purple or to green, purple being the complemental colour of yellow, and green the complemental of red. Innumerable tests can be made in this way, and very lucky “finds” of colour are the result. Apart from this, each “find” is a discovery of your own colour-sense, and will give a personal note to your rooms. From time to time, also, your experiments may help you in the art of “cutting” an unwelcome acquaintance,

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as by sending a Christmas card in vermilion with the seasonable good words printed in big grey letters. The shock of that discord is made more unfriendly by a margin of white paper with orange stars at the corners.

Trifling thus with boomerangs of colour has yet another useful purpose; it trains the eye to hate them, a lesson that many persons avoid by the use of milder discords that deaden the colour-sense. As an exercise to correct the mischief done, let me recommend grey and vermilion, and for a reason similar to that which a carpenter had in mind when he said to his apprentice: "Mind, lad, you must hit your fingers and nails, or you'll never learn to use your tools."

Indeed, we must annoy ourselves with failure and pain if we wish to learn the rudiments of art. You may read about colour as an amusement to be forgotten; you must experiment with discords and harmonies if you wish to furnish your home.

D. *The Associations of Colour*

Colours, like perfumes, affect the mind in very peculiar ways, setting thought astir on many past events. By this means happiness and unhappiness may be called back to memory, giving us a fondness for certain colours which are ugly, and a hatred for others which are beautiful and kind. Though this has ever been a common experience in the lives of a great many persons, I cannot remember to have read anything concerning it in books on colour or on decorative art. Yet, clearly, it is not a matter to be forgotten.

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A lady at the age of eighty, years ago, wept whenever she saw a blue flower, and would never give the reason till her last illness came. She then said: "You know how I like flowers, but I want them to be blue now, violets or cornflowers, because Ned loved them, and I'm nearer to him now than I've been these sixty years." Ned was her only boy and had died as a child of three when she was not yet twenty-one. Another old lady was affected in a similar way by white flowers, and particularly snowdrops, which she associated always with bad luck. There are secret gardens in a great many minds and the colours there are not all pleasant and fortunate.

It is more than probable that to these associations of colour, with their attendant likes and dislikes, we owe the perplexing difference of opinion that exists among connoisseurs on great works of art. Men whose eye for colour is known to be good—fine painters, for example—have often a strong hostility towards certain paintings which rank among the masterpieces of colour. No explanation is given of these antipathies, but Dr. Fell judgments of this kind spring as a rule from the emotions of association.

If a beautiful colour is connected in any mind with an unpleasant event, all the connoisseurs in the world must accept that colour as unbeautiful to that one mind; and hence it is impossible to form arbitrary laws to guide householders in their use of colour. The utmost one can do is to give hints from the acknowledged masters, leaving each reader to apply them in his own way and for his own joy.

PART II
THE HOUSE IN DETAILS



THE "ISABELLA" BROCADE
Messrs. STORIE & Co., Kensington, London

INTRODUCTION

HOUSE-OWNERS AND HOUSEHOLDERS

A GOOD many persons now build houses for themselves and many others buy them under a system of mortgage and through building societies, so there is plenty of time for repentance by instalment when a man "changes his mind." Some years ago a horse was purchased by monthly payments, and no animal ever before was the object of so many daily criticisms. Horses of a very special kind ought to be bred for that method of "easy" business, so called. And this applies to houses also; an unusual type should be built when buyers are given a long time in which to complete their wish to have property. If we get a thing and pay for it at once, we try as a rule to make the best of our bargain, though the elation which accompanies buying is generally followed by a cold fit of reflection and self-criticism; during which, you will notice, the young and impulsive may give away their new purchases to friends, and in the joy of making presents get rid of the feeling that they have been extravagant. The chill of after-reflection is very much prolonged by any system of "easy payment"; and I have never known a man who became owner of a house

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little by little, but regretted the fact with a self-pity which bored his friends like an old man's repetitions of a favourite story. Build castles in the air, but do not buy a house for yourself, is the best advice that any writer can give in a book on homes and their furnishing; for a book should be addressed to the many, and not to those fortunate persons who have money enough not only to purchase a good site in a neighbourhood remote from industrial speculation, but to do every detail of the work thoroughly with the help which only an excellent architect can give.

It is necessary to speak of these matters here because the desire to possess a house has become far more common than it used to be, and many cunning agencies want to exploit it for their own ends. Cheap building has been the order of the day for a long time. Blocks of flats here and there are now in the hands of banks; much villa property is waiting to be bought by householders; and the building trades have still to be kept busy despite the over-production in speculative jobs and jobbing. The paymaster is to be the public, while the profits are not very likely to enrich that national exchequer which is represented by the country's home life and character.

To speak plainly, it is anti-social to speculate in a nation's homes, and during the last fifty years that speculation has been rife everywhere in England, doing so much harm that the term "jerry-building" is now a household word for scamped and dishonest workman-

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ship. Yet, somehow, there is a revival of the very belief which launched with success that first enterprise in "jerried" house property; and the belief is that many persons are still ready to look upon cheap work in architecture as quite possible under modern conditions. We read about excellent cottages for £120, and "ideal" small houses for £300. But it is well to be cautious. To be hasty in thought is better than to be hurried in action, and for the same reason which caused the bishop to say to his flock: "If you find sin pleasant, then sin to yourselves in things imagined, and repent; don't be so unwise as to sin outside yourselves in deeds, which have a life of their own at variance with yours."

Any one can *think* a house into being and enjoy this mental exercise, just as any one may take a tenancy of thought in splendid town houses and country seats. With a few photographs to help us, it is easy to imagine that we own a dozen noble mansions without being worried with servants and polite bills. After a while another set of photographs may be bought, for even the imagination is apt to get tired of its lordship over the same places. A longing for change becomes urgent now and then, particularly under repairing leases, or when a house belongs to the occupier. *Toujours perdrix* should be the motto of the half-fortunate house-owners: namely, those who have good homes in the country but cannot afford to have flats in town for winter use.

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A motto for those house-owners who are quite unlucky, having saddled themselves with ill-built villas and cottages, would not be easy to find. They cannot hope to sublet their places with much success; and if they find tenants who are willing to turn them into happy landlords, the coming of quarter day has drawbacks, for ill-built houses need not a little repair, but a great deal, sometimes a third of the rent *per annum*. Such was the estimate of the late J. J. Stevenson, whose book on "House Architecture" ought to be in all Public Libraries.

It is not my wish to overstate any part of my subject, but few speculations are more risky than house ownership, and the risk is increased, not lessened, by a small outlay of capital. In this connection, surely, it is worth while to consider the current price of building material and the wages paid to workmen; add to this the builder's profit and the cost of an architect's designs, and then form in your mind a picture of the house you can reasonably expect to build for £500. An architect will give you the best result which can be achieved for that sum; but where is the house to be, and is the neighbourhood likely to go "up" or "down"? Might it not be reasonable that you should see a house newly finished at the estimated cost of £500? Examine the rooms carefully, test them in a practical way and gain technical knowledge of their worth. Are the walls sound-resisting, or do they interfere with the privacy of home life, particularly in bedrooms that adjoin each

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ENTRANCE TO MUSIC ROOM, LITTLECOURT

WALTER CAVE, *Architect*, London



THE FIREPLACE AND BAY, MUSIC ROOM, LITTLECOURT

WALTER CAVE, *Architect*, London

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other? Are the floors solid and good? Defective walls and floors are bad enough under a three years' lease, but imagine what they become when they are yours for life. The exterior brickwork may have a thorough look; still, how much water do the bricks absorb? There are bricks of many kinds, and some varieties "drink" their own weight of water; hence a cautious man should not buy a house without testing the exterior walls. Get three or four surplus bricks, weigh them, put them for a time to stand in water, and then see by what percentage their weight has been increased.

It is surprising how careless most persons are in the matter of walls and floors. "Are the drains in order?" they ask. "Does the roof leak?" "Are there plenty of cupboards?" These questions are stereotyped, while other essential points are forgotten. It is not too much to say that the comfort of a home depends on the way in which the floors and walls are built. Parents ought not to be overheard by their children, and little ones at their play need some freedom. How can they be happy and natural if their games are heard all over a house? And what, again, is the value of a wall when every movement in one bedroom can be heard in another? Is that civilised home life? Recently I stayed for a while in a small London house built more than sixty years ago, and therefore better than recent speculative work. Yet I could hear sounds from the bedroom under mine and in two bedrooms on my floor. It is most un-

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pleasant to find that bad floors and walls turn us into unwilling eavesdroppers, spies on a neighbour's actions and words ; and remember what noises mean to the sick during a time of dangerous illness. Note, too, that the building of bad floors and walls became more general precisely at a time when the hubbub from traffic in the streets began to grow worse, and when pianos found their way into what may be called average houses, neither poor nor yet well-to-do. The arts may be divided into two classes, the silent and the noisy ; the former cannot disturb many households at a time, while the annoyances of music pay many calls at once, and remain as unwelcome visitors for hours, not only irritating the nerves, but enabling those who are nearly deaf to appreciate the skill with which walls and floors may be built to transmit noises. In rows of suburban houses the timber joists of the floors in one house often touch those of the next, with the result that several houses become one in noise, for wood is an excellent conductor of sound. Buyers of villa property should test the joists, or, better still, should give up buying bad stock.

And there are other troubles in the jerry-builder's contributions to the miseries of town life. Draughts merit some attention, as they are not at all friendly to good health when doors and windows happen to be in wrong positions. Put a large window at one end of a small room, and a door to face it ; you have then a familiar scheme for a cutting ventilation by draughts.

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Householders ought to think of this before they sign their leases ; and a builder's plans for a house should never be accepted without an architect's opinion on the placing of the doors and windows. The difference between a modern builder and a good architect is often as great as that between a butcher and a good surgeon, yet the jerry-builder has been encouraged by a host of men who would never think of calling in a butcher to operate on their families.

All these matters have a direct bearing on the art of furnishing a home, for why should any one give thought to that art, and spend money on it, when average villas and flats have structural defects that tell against comfort and happiness ? This question is put to me by my friends, and it is hard to answer. However much care may be given to the furnishing, the discomforts of bad floors and walls, of ill-placed windows and doors, are serious ; and very often the servants' rooms are bad. A small kitchen is a furnace in summer, so the cook or the "general" gives notice ; and there are flats in which the kitchen is flanked by a bedroom at one side and a water-closet at the other, with doors that open into the kitchen. We have, indeed, inherited so many unpleasant things from the last fifty years of speculative building, and these things will take such a long time to clear away, that care in furnishing is no doubt discouraged by the conditions under which we live. It is quite a common thing to hear people say, "Happily, we did not pay much for our furniture. The lease will

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soon be out, and we'll then try to do better for ourselves."

Yet, for all that, the old proverb is right. "Ill-spent money *is* a double loss"; and to spend less than is necessary on furniture is a short-lived economy, while to invest the right sum in the right way is to get utilities that endure for a lifetime. Several artists bought some Eastern rugs thirty years ago, and they are still in use and beautiful. They cost £5 each. How many rugs at one pound apiece would have worn out in thirty years, and what beauty would they have had from the first?

It is only by looking at practical matters in a rational way that the act of furnishing bad houses well can be understood as a reasonable act. If a house or a flat is ill-built, we do not get rid of that inconvenience by using ill-made furniture, and discordant schemes of colour; we are like the man who would not buy readable books because he already owned certain volumes which he could not like. Apart from that, most furniture is made to a scale long fixed by use and tradition, so that a suite for one ordinary house may be employed in any ordinary house almost. There is a settled standard for the height of chairs and tables, and the size of other household necessities does not vary much; certainly not enough to be troublesome to any class of purchaser. We may guess in what way our lives are most likely to be shaped by events; that is, the houses in which we first make a home

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have rooms of average dimensions, quite in keeping with the average measure of success which we are likely to meet with, most of us ; and hence the furniture chosen for our first rooms will be useful in the last also, as a rule, if we buy it with care. There is no need to have anything unusual in size and shape, nor do manufacturers give thought to exceptional needs.

These are points worth consideration, particularly by those who say: "Well, we have a short tenure in the houses we occupy, and the necessary provisions of life are now so hard to win, that really we cannot encourage the manufacture of well-made furniture. We mean to outgrow our houses, so we buy articles having only sufficient life in them to last the brief period of our leases, and are content to put up with some discomfort meantime. Besides which, what *is* well-made furniture? Each decade sees a new style, and the furniture of one decade is hated by the next. May not something be said for a tepid appreciation of bad work that wears out?"

Much harm is certainly done by fashions in style. Crops of new designs appear annually, textiles, wall-papers, and the like, when no more change is needed than that which accompanies the working of the national mind in literature. Novelties may be a boon to trade, but they kill tradition, the surest guide in all arts and crafts. Even when they are good, which as a rule they are not, they bewilder the mind with their ever-changing variety. If only householders would ask for samples

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and patterns not of this year, but of several years ago, the manufacturers would be obliged to form and issue traditional designs, which would be a great help to all who are concerned in furnishing. It is absurd to suppose that "the last thing out" is necessarily the best thing for householders to purchase. Yet this fallacy has had a long reign, like many other falsehoods. Last autumn I was privileged to see some of the designs which were then being made into catalogues for 1909. Novelty was the aim, of course, and novelty is the rock upon which the home arts are shattered into absurd ruins. What struck me more than anything else was a pretty-pretty realism, the negation of all good decorative art. The designs appeared to say: "The public is a childish fool, and must be humoured with ingenious toys."

But still, as the unexpected often happens, the public may become reasonable one day, having learnt that the home arts, like plants, must grow from the same roots year by year, and bear flowers with a family likeness to their predecessors.

CHAPTER II

WALLS AND THEIR TREATMENT

WALLS are a background to a picture, and this picture is a room, with furniture to occupy the middle distance, and the foreground peopled by living men, women, and children.

What are the qualities of a good background? The first one is repose, for a background must keep behind the rest of the picture; and yet, while never asserting itself in a troublesome way, it must support and enrich a definite scheme. There is nothing more difficult in art than the treatment of backgrounds. It is so easy to make them dull, and so easy to make them restless. But when the right background is discovered, a good general effect is within easy reach. You will understand, no doubt, that the part which backgrounds have to play in rooms varies much under different conditions, for no one would treat small rooms as though they were large, nor believe that walls ought to be ornamented in one uniform way no matter what the style of architecture may be.

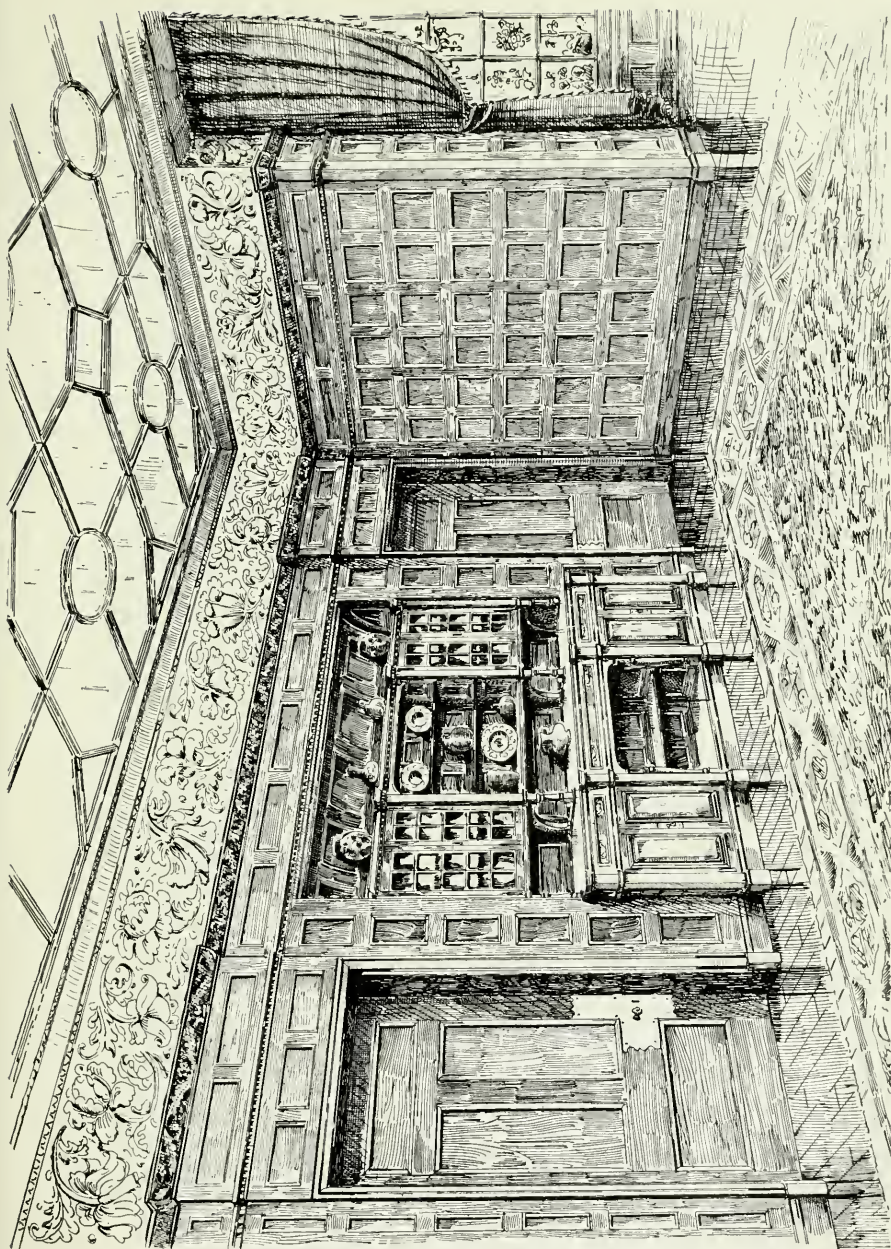
So our own first general principle is this: "Walls are a background to a picture of household life in a furnished room, but their qualities as a background depend on

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many circumstances, such as the room's light, shape and size, its type of architecture, and the needs of its furniture also ; because a treatment, too ornate to put behind pictures, may be a charming background by itself, that is, without pictures."

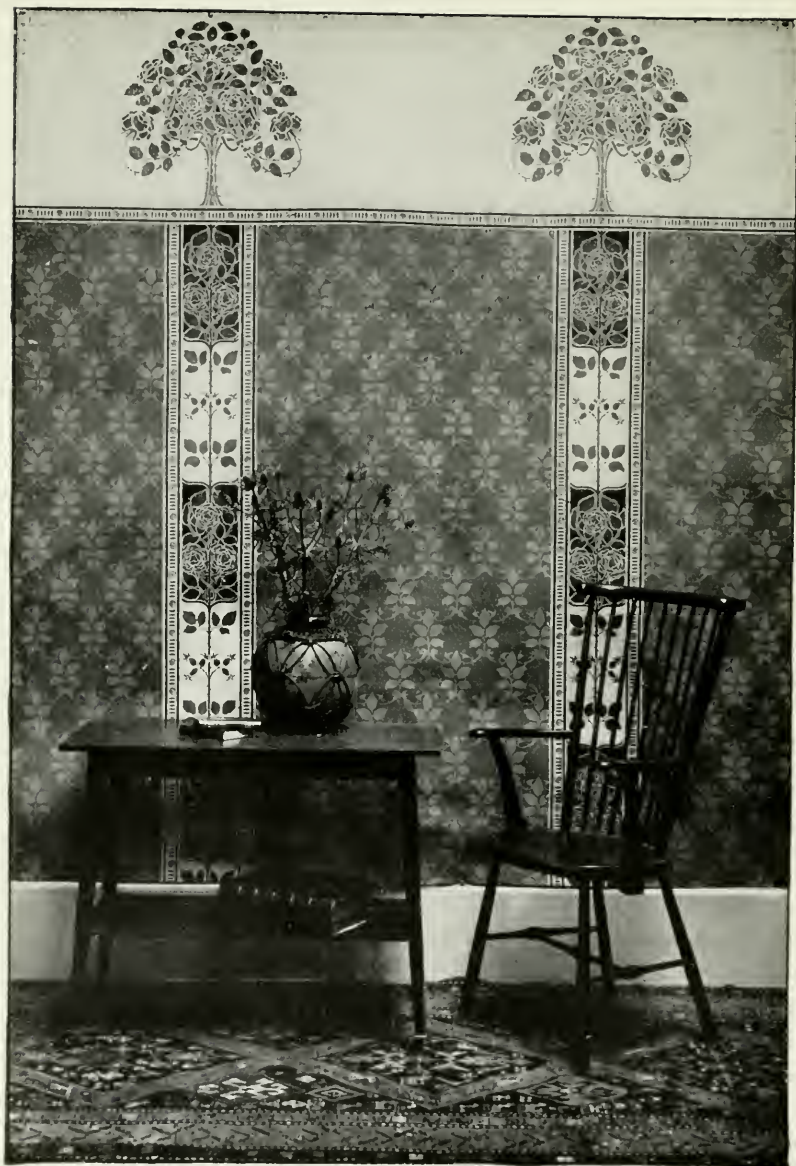
This principle leaves abundant opportunity for the exercise of choice, taste, and individual feeling, without which a home has no special interest. And this being so, another principle must be stated here: "The trade of a manufacturer is to supply you with materials, not to dominate your home ; you go to him as you do to a chemist, not as you go to your family doctor."

Many persons fail to understand the importance of this simple matter. If they become discontented with their rooms, they do not learn a few principles of decorative art, nor seek help from a good architect, but call in their local tradesman to set their homes in order. Would they ask a bookseller to choose the books they need ? or leave their opinions on other subjects to be guided by tailors, bootmakers, and the like ? Surely a home should be made by those who live in it, should represent quietly what they feel and think, what they like and what they do. As a glove has no individuality until it has been worn, so a principle of art has no life until it has been applied with personal judgment, and that judgment your own, not mine, nor that of any one else. You may seek guidance for your judgment, of course, but if you allow yourself to be dominated, how can your home belong to you in its colour and arrangement ?



OAK-PANELLED DINING-ROOM, WITH FITTED SIDEBOARD. MODELLED PLASTER FRIEZE, AND
"HAMMERSMITH" CARPET.—POLAPIT TAMAR, CORNWALL

By Morris & Co., London



WALL DECORATION IN A SMALL HOUSE

JEFFREY & Co., London

WALLS AND THEIR TREATMENT

The useful and necessary thing is that you should rather go astray and fail, than live in a house which another person's taste furnished for you without help from your personal wants and desires.

This being said, a few other points can be mentioned concerning walls, not to *govern* your mind, but to guide it with suggestive facts. A wall is flat, solid, and upright, three characteristics which ought to be kept in mural decoration. But in what ways are they to be kept? Walls may be treated in accordance with many different methods, and in each method those three essential qualities—solidity, flatness, and uprightness—are subject to special risks. For example, suppose a metal rail be put around the cornice, and suppose we hang from it a suitable drapery, to be fastened to another rail above the skirting, so that the textile fabric may not be blown about when the windows are open. In this treatment of walls much care must be taken with the folds into which the drapery falls, because they must look natural and yet decoratively flat and upright. The solidity of the walls behind we take for granted because the curtains do not hide the cornice nor trail on the floor; they merely cover the wall-surface in an attractive way. But suppose we put pictures upon the drapery? What then? By so doing we spoil the background, because curtains arranged in folds are not a proper material to put behind pictures. They take the place of tapestries, and who would hang paintings over real tapestries?

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Every form of mural decoration may be spoilt by trifles, but tradition has framed two principles to guide amateurs as well as artists. The first one is that decorative work on a flat surface must not be realistic and pictorial; and the second, that decorative patterns must be conventionalised. These principles need explanation.

1. *That decorative work on a flat surface must not be realistic and pictorial.*

Why? How is this question to be answered in its relation to walls? Note, first of all, that in pictorial representation the aim is to give distance and to make a spectator forget that he is looking at a subject drawn or painted on a flat surface. The more variety there is in the perspective, the more interested we are in the illusion which the artist's skill has called up into pictorial presence. If our eyes seem to look a hundred miles beyond the foreground, a painting is more attractive than what is technically known as a "close" scene, a picture without distance. There are thus many *planes* in this form of art; that is, the objects represented appear to be at different distances from the spectator's eye.

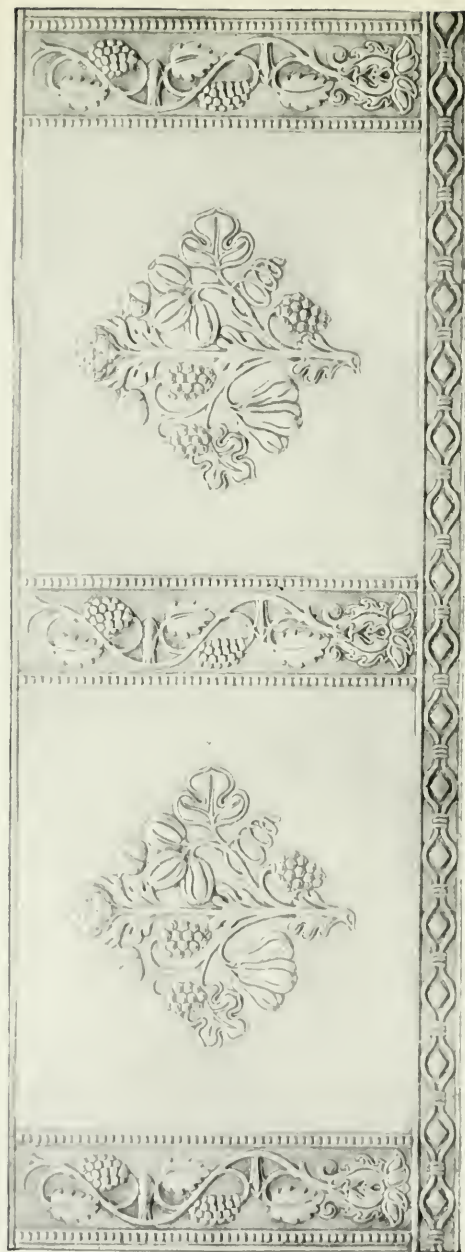
Is that what you wish to find on the flat surface of a wall? No: because the realism of perspective would make holes in the walls and so destroy their flatness. To look through a wall at a distant landscape is an illusion to amuse a child, like one of those large mirrors which cause rooms to appear twice their length. Such



THE "PIPER" FRIEZE (EMBOSSED)

Designed by STEPHEN WEBB

JEFFREY & Co., London



"THE FIG AND VINE" FRIEZE (EMBOSSED)

Designed by FRANK MURRAY

JEFFREY & Co., London

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make-believes are not admitted into any art where decoration is the main purpose. Study a good frieze of figures in sculpture, and note with what care the figures are kept as nearly as possible *on one plane*; that is, at the same distance from a spectator's eye. Study, too, the masters of mural painting, and you will find that unless their work is framed pictorially in niches or recesses, they treat their perspective in a formal way, so as to suggest what they do not wish to realise—namely, distance. Only enough distance is suggested to give variety to the composition, and the figures are grouped and painted in a decorative way, so that they and the wall may preserve the solid appearance of a solid building. Decoration enriches a flat surface, while pictorial art gives to a flat surface the realism of space and distance.

Nor is there anything unreasonable in this difference of treatment. Common sense rules here as elsewhere in the arts. If you put down a carpet you do not wish that it should represent a landscape showing a distant city with a range of hills behind it; what you need is a design that lies flat on the floor, unobtrusive, without realism, and therefore in keeping with the purpose which a carpet has to serve under your feet. In like manner, if you employ tiles for your fireplace you want them as notes of flat colour, and not because the work of tiles in decoration is to form pictures. The Dutch, it is true, painted a little landscape on each tile, but they knew that the picture would not be seen at a little distance,

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while its colour would look broken and mysterious. To-day, on the other hand, a dozen tiles and more are made to form a large landscape, to be repeated on each side of a fireplace. The effect is comically absurd, like the manufacturer's misunderstanding of what tiles should do. Persian work would teach him many useful lessons.

Still, there is ever a temptation to be undecorative in decoration ; even well-known artists go wrong at times, falling into realism despite themselves ; and hence the importance of our second principle :

2. *That ornamental patterns must be conventionalised.*

There are three main forms of conventional treatment ; in one the patterns are borrowed from old work ; another invents them freely in a formal manner, while in the third they are based on natural objects. The invented patterns may be geometrical, or scrolled, or diapered, or made into arabesques, or combined into new arrangements of graceful lines. Those which are based on natural objects may range from a hunting scene on a tapestry to a spray of roses repeated over a wall in a paper-hanging. In those days when manufacturers were very excellent craftsmen, designs were made conventional as a matter of course ; but in Queen Victoria's reign, soon after 1840, traders who were not craftsmen began to issue patterned work in accordance with their own taste, and the public became unused to the traditional methods of good design. Every kind of flower was drawn in a naturalistic way and printed in

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trailing bouquets over textile fabrics and wall-papers. An attempt is now being (A.D. 1909) to revive this tiresome, foolish work, by which things of minor importance in a room are turned into eye-startling absurdities. Why a sofa should be upholstered with a garden of hollyhocks, and a window-curtain glare with clustered red roses, are matters which little children may be able to explain. "Oh, please, do let us pluck them!" is the criticism that children may well make. If hollyhocks are proper things to sit upon, why not cabbages, and carrots, and full-blown sunflowers, and prize-bred melons and vegetable marrows?

Yet the Victorian absurdities are not worse than many scores of patterned stuffs and papers which have been sold to the public in recent years. The other day I saw a wall-paper covered with macaws, and three old chairs upholstered with bad pieces of tapestry representing a windmill, a lake, and a landscape with cows and sheep. We may yet sit on a Madonna by Raphael. Pattern-books of wall-papers have a dreadful fascination. Who buys such horrible trash, glaringly coloured and with large patterns that fill a room with restlessness? This work **must** be sold, for it is found year after year in displayed samples, and tradesmen would not produce it if they did not earn profits by so doing. Let us hope that these pattern-books will not be handed on to the historians of the next centuries, whose verdict on English taste since the year 1830 will amuse and astonish their contemporaries.

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The truth is, though much progress has been made since Pugin and William Morris began their campaigns, our homes are still in their "ideal" period, as newspaper advertisements warn us; and between the "ideal" and the real there is a limbo full of perished aims and efforts. Try to get for your rooms any detail you may need, from a wall-paper to a covering for your sofa, and you will find that good things at moderate prices are still very hard to find, because trade "novelties" have little connection with the common sense of good design. They have much in sympathy with exhibition pictures, which, being painted to attract attention under competitive difficulties, do not sort with the necessary quietness of a room. Pictures in such a high key of colour as may look tame in a crowded gallery will seem crude in a room; and patterns which do not offend the eye when arranged with care in a busy shop, may attract vastly too much notice in a home—a point which manufacturers would do well to remember. We need co-ordination here; that is, we need a recognition of the fact that a home is made up of many decorative things, and that some uniformity of style and aim should be common to those trades which supply the essentials of house furnishing.

There is no style in modern work, but a superabundance of styles, nearly all at variance with each other. The wall-papers are often *too* this or *too* that; the textile fabrics are not in key with the wall-papers, but make their bid as though they occupy the main posi-

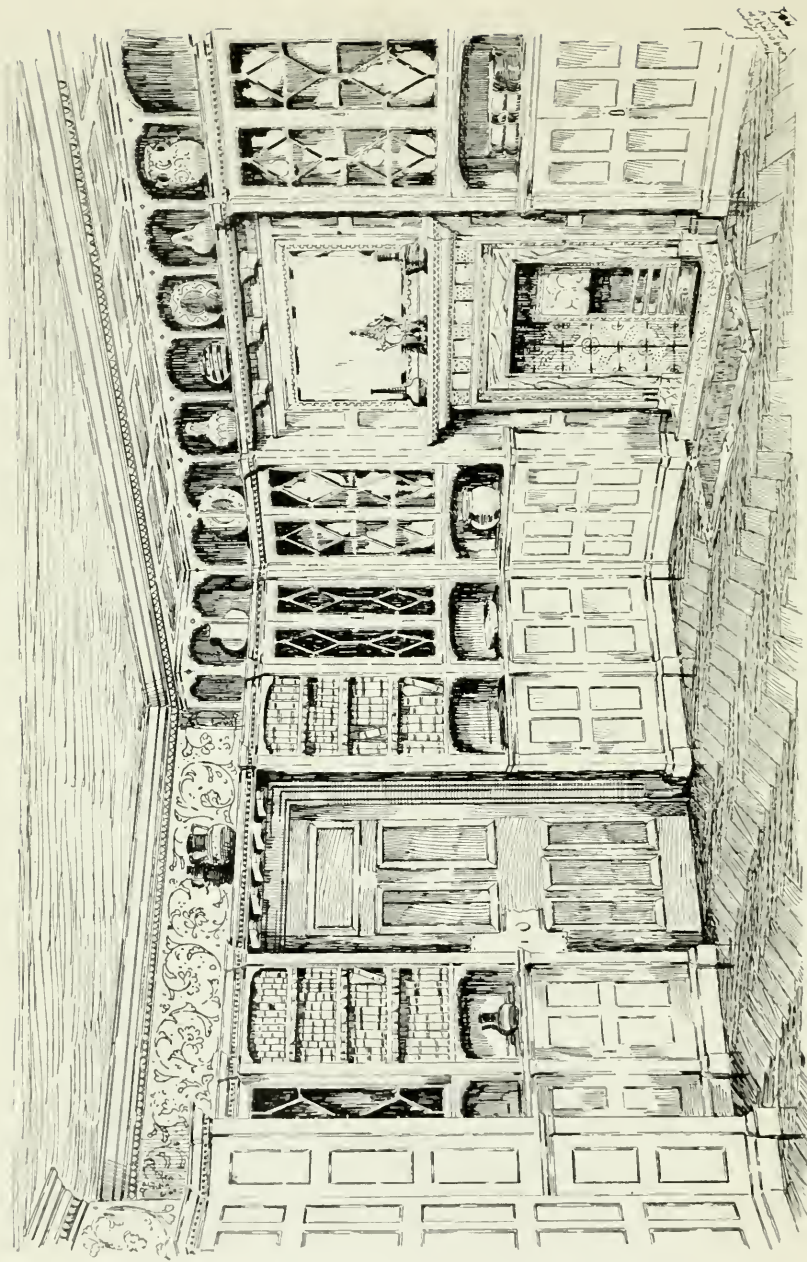


WALL-PAPER : SPRINGTIME

(To be used without pictures)

Designed by HEYWOOD SUMNER

JEFFREY & Co., London



MORNING ROOM OR SMALL LIBRARY, BLETCHLEY PARK, BUCKS. WHITE PAINTED PINE
PANELLING, EMBOSSED CANVAS FRIEZE, AND PARQUET FLOOR

Morris & Co., London

WALLS AND THEIR TREATMENT

tions in a room ; modern carpets are often *too* green or *too* cold in blue tints ; and, briefly, our trades show enterprise without uniting their aims to suit the ordinary needs of home life.

This fact is so well known to experts that only the inexperienced seek adventures among the scores and scores of modern patterns. The experienced choose Oriental rugs, put self-coloured papers on their walls, and look out for textile fabrics copied or adapted from old designs, English, Sicilian, Italian, or Spanish. The designs here are formal, unassertive, right ; the colours keep their place *on* the material, do not start out from it and tire the eye ; and these qualities could be general in modern work if the competitions of trade were subordinated to some ruling style or tradition. Even our best-known designers, men of genius sometimes, have turned out a good deal of work which they never put into their own houses, so that we cannot look to them for safe guidance. Care and judgment must be exercised by any one who desires to have their patterns. We cannot say : " Wall-papers by Mr. So-and-So are always good, and set off most schemes of decoration as are likely to be common among householders." It would be easy to mention bad wall-papers by excellent designers ; bad, not through want of care, but because they do too much in aggressively clever ways. And the fault always, or nearly always, arises from an attempt to be realistic and yet conventional. Leaves are lengthened to a great size, or flowers are drawn as

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though they belonged to Swift's Kingdom of Brobdingnag; and sometimes ordinary forget-me-nots are put among this giant growth of supposed decorative plant-designs. Of course, we do not arrive at convention by means of an exaggerated realism. The purpose of a conventional design is to *suggest* some natural object which, if imitated pictorially, would not be a fitting ornament for a flat surface, as on a wall, or for a surface broken by folds, as in a curtain. Suppose a wall-paper represented a tree and its branches, with squirrels cracking nuts amid the foliage. Imagine this design repeated over the walls. Do you not feel that this naturalism has no relation at all to the purpose which a wall-paper ought to serve?

Further, if realism in applied art is justified, no limits must be set to its use. Why not have a portrait on the seat of each chair? It would not be less inappropriate than a realistic pattern of leaves and fruits and flowers. Why not represent a horse-race on a carpet for a billiard-room, or a scene of family life on the drawing-room curtains? Believe me, the less realism you have in applied ornament, that is, in ornament placed on useful things, the happier you will be in your rooms. Realism is full of life and restlessness, while conventional patterns are silent, reposeful, unobtrusive.

Good Oriental carpets and rugs are beautiful lessons in the art of common sense as employed by tradition for patterns to enrich a flat surface. Study, too, the ways in which the old Persian potters formalised leaves and

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flowers for their glazed ware ; and note that Eastern pottery and textile fabrics never fail to go well together, not only because the colour is charmingly harmonious, but because the same principles of design are common to all. The work is decorative, not pictorial ; it is beautiful because it looks inevitably right as a surface ornament.

Still, laymen have every right to say in this connection : “ Granted that many forms of realistic pattern are absurd on walls and on textile fabrics ; but what about the realism in old tapestries ? Were not historical scenes represented by tapestry makers before the Reformation, and secular and religious scenes during the Renaissance ? ”

These questions cannot be escaped, and they are complicated by three other facts :

1. It is admitted by all good judges that old tapestries are the finest decoration for walls.

2. It is also beyond doubt that even portraits were worked on mediæval tapestries.

3. It seems likely that deliberate attempts were made at first to imitate natural objects as realistically as was possible.

Why, then, are the results approved by modern experts ? There must be some appreciable degree of realism in the old tapestries, since they represent many subjects both from history and from real life ; but we must remember the conditions which governed the progress of this ancient art, from the tenth century to the

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sixteenth, when the use of tapestries began to give place to stamped leather and to ornamental wainscots. The early "tapisters" were not artists with a knowledge of perspective, nor were they admirable draughtsmen, like the painters of later times; and this want of skill gave a quaint conventional look to their imitations. Their perspective was not real perspective, and their figures suggested life without realising the actual shapes and movements seen in nature. Thus a convention was formed, and not only that, but formalised, partly because the chosen designs had to be weaved into a textile fabric, a mosaic of pieces of colour made up of dyed threads, and partly because tapisters soon learnt that this process of weaving required certain definite traits in the patterns and figures. Nothing vague or undefined could be represented with success. Every object needed a bold silhouette, a well-defined presence, and this produced a uniform method of technique, quite opposed to a painter's realism, which owes much to indefinite shapes and vague distances. Also—and this point is not less important—the colours had to be those which dyers could make, not those which were Nature's own. Indeed, Gothic tapestry-weavers were not so foolish as to copy Nature's colours, their aim always was to get depth of tone, richness of hue, exquisite gradation of tint, crisp details, firm outlines, and beautiful harmonies. They were not troubled if their trees were unlike Nature's, or if their horses were such as no sportsman had ever seen; it was the mosaic of general

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colour that delighted them, and if their subjects were animated they were satisfied. Their patrons, too, asked for nothing more. Kings and nobles gave fortunes for Gothic tapestries, Edward IV. paying £984 8s. 6*d.* for twenty pieces of Arras, some strips of velvet, and valances for a bed: a sum which must be multiplied by twelve *at least* if we wish to get its purchasing value in modern money.

We have seen, then, that Gothic tapestries were conventional in colour, in perspective, and in technical method, all outlines being crisp and definite. They were well within the limits of decorative work. But this cannot be said of later tapestries, where attempts are made to vie with the painter's art. William Morris said:

“The style of even the best period of the Renaissance is wholly unfit for tapestry: accordingly we find that tapestry retained its Gothic character longer than any other of the pictorial arts. A comparison of the wall-hangings in the Great Hall at Hampton Court with those in the Solar or Drawing-room, will make this superiority of the earlier design for its purpose clear to any one not lacking in artistic perception; and the comparison is all the fairer, as both the Gothic tapestries of the Solar and the post-Gothic hangings of the Hall are pre-eminently good of their kinds.”

So the art of tapestry-weaving declined when a delight in realism began to meddle with its traditional conventions; and I offer this fact to the modern trades-

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men who wish to make inexpensive tapestries for rooms, but without studying their subject. Recently I saw some tapestries at ten guineas each, 17 ft. long and 6 ft. broad ; they were good in idea, their price was reasonable, but the workmanship was too realistic. Tapestry must be tapestry, for it cannot compete with success against the art of figure-painting ; and to do badly what a painter does well degrades the noblest of the weaving arts.

In relation to this matter—*i.e.*, decorative art and realism—we must remember always that a craftsman's methods are governed by the materials with which he works, and his duty is to *assert* those materials. That is, he must bring out their special qualities, he must not be ashamed of them and their limitations. Woods and metals, accordingly, must be treated as such ; wall-papers should be nothing more than decorative designs printed on paper, not pictures which no painter of any reputation would put his name to ; and weaved fabrics should represent the special characteristics that belong (1) to tapestry work, (2) carpet-weaving, (3) mechanical weaving, (4) painting and block-printing, and (5) needle-work and embroidery. All these different processes give a different charm to good design either in or on textile fabrics, and no textile craft can borrow another's process or methods without losing its own particular merits.

This fact is one which any layman can apply with ease to the necessities of home life. For example, it is

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impossible that a wood-carver should be able to represent the realism of fruits and flowers ; this art belongs to a few exceptional painters ; and yet a good many wood-carvers have wasted years of their lives in a vain attempt to rival those painters. The textures of their woods could not give the bloom on grapes and peaches, the delicacy and the colour of flowers, and the mellow ripeness of fruits. The very qualities which delight the eye most of all are unattainable, so why waste time and skill in carving wood into the shapes of fruits and flowers ? Even those shapes in wood, however realistic, have not the tender fragile look of flowers nor the soft modelling that fruits have. So the wood-carver gains nothing at all in art by his attempt to vie with painters ; he invites ridicule—and should get it from all householders. For similar reasons, all based on common sense, wood-carving ought not to rival either bronze or marble, materials which have in sculpture their own great qualities, and these no wood can imitate. When wood is treated properly, as in old wall-panels or in the choir stalls of a cathedral, or in decorative sculptured figures which show tool marks and the “nature” of wood ; when carving is done with a craftsman’s love for his material, wood is beautiful as wood, which is all we can expect to get from it in art.

And again, many decorative things may be done within limits by machinery, but there are forms of handicraft which owe their value to the fact that they are done by hand, and these ought not to be imitated

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by machines, as in the case of embroideries and laces. A machine repeats a thing in precisely the same way, while a skilled hand gives variety to repetitions, producing a quality known as "accident," which makes a handicraft more attractively human than a machine-craft : yes, and better for your enjoyment also, if you have a liking for subtle merits. If not, you enjoy gladly what you are able to enjoy, just as persons with no ear for music accept their lot without any affectation of shame.

Even the use of machines for wall-papers has disadvantages—from a householder's standpoint. A machine prints all the colours at once from rollers, so the pattern is often imperfect and blurred, while a handicraftsman uses a block for each tint, the outlines of the pattern being reproduced by means of flat brass wire driven edgeways into the wood block. The paper measures 21 inches wide by 12 yards long; the tints, mixed with size, are put in shallow wells or trays, and each block in turn, hanging from above by a cord, is dipped in a well of colour and then guided to the paper flat on the table. By this method excellent results are obtained, while in machine-made papers we must be cautious, choosing those in which the pattern is printed on a toned ground in one tint only.

When we know how things are made, we feel the necessity of going to those manufacturers whose work is known to be good, and who get designs and sound criticisms from distinguished artists. There are excellent firms among the makers of wall-papers, and I may

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mention those that I know best, leaving each reader to add names to the list :

Jeffrey & Co., 31 Mortimer St., Regent St., London ; Sanderson and Sons, Chiswick, London ; Essex & Co., 116 Victoria St., London ; and Morris & Co., 449 Oxford St., London, who sell both textile fabrics and wall-papers designed by William Morris.

Some artists have given great attention to designs for wall-papers, and their names count for much in trade catalogues. These are Mr. Walter Crane and Mr. Heywood Sumner, Mr. Lewis F. Day, Mr. Allan F. Vigers, Mr. C. F. A. Voysey, Mr. G. C. Haité, Mr. H. W. Batley, the late J. D. Sedding, the late William Morris, and many others.

On the other hand, modern trades have their "seasons," though seasons do not flower in art with the coming of springtime; there is no reason why this year's patterns should be better than those of the last decade. Accordingly, no attention should be given to the old saying: "Last season's wall-papers are out of stock, madam; these are the latest designs, all fresh from the manufacturers." Why should any good design go out of stock? What benefit is that to the public? Householders ought really to put a stop to "seasons" in wall-papers and textile fabrics, since good work does not grow old; it is temporary fashions that die out, leaving our room decoration as out of date as a hat three years

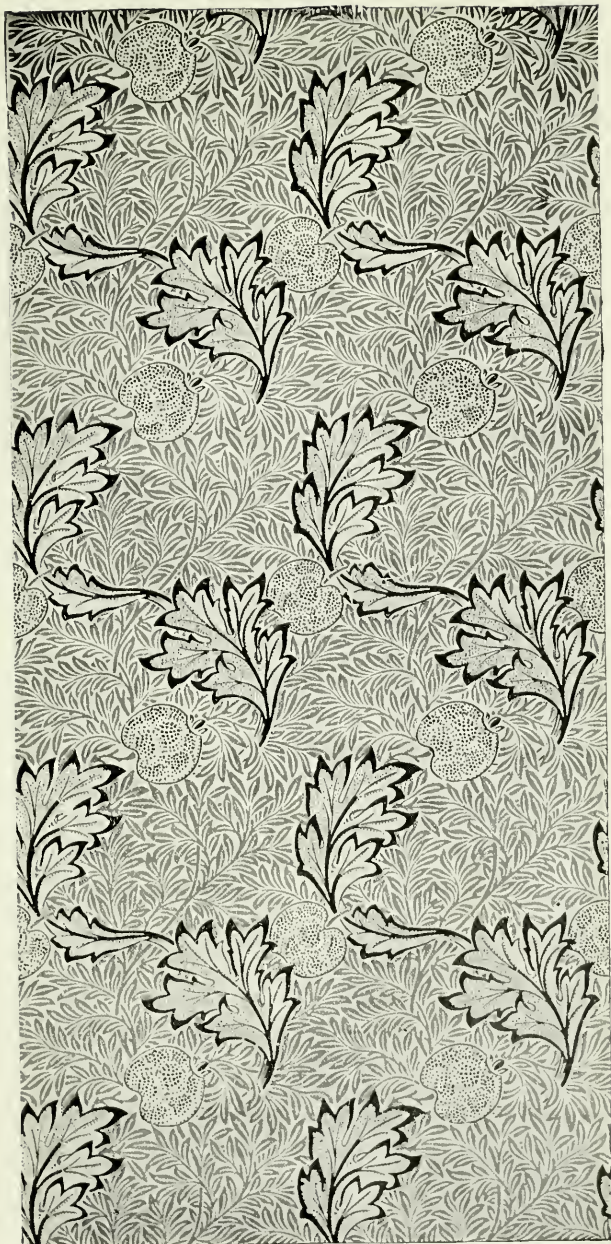
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old. Moreover, the art of furnishing, however carefully we practise it, means to each of us a large investment of capital, so why should we speculate in mere fashions? What we need are definite styles, carried on from year to year, developing little by little, so as to accord, in a better way, with ordinary home wants.

It is so much easier to choose the right thing when a uniformity of style and aim runs through the household arts. We have but to ask for given wall-papers that we know by name, and familiar designs for textile fabrics. We get our materials with no more difficulty than a painter meets with in buying canvases and colours; then we proceed to use them in our own way and for our own comfort. For instance, we have to choose between two methods in the making of a background with wall-papers:

1. Without pictures;
2. With pictures.

The first method is more difficult, because the paper must be a sufficing decoration, and patterns are always a risk; they are hard to manage with complete success, just as adjectives are in writing; only, if you happen to be displeased with the effect they make, you cannot delete the patterns! The paper is there on the walls, and if you displace it you must spend money. Yet there are wall-papers which ought to be employed without pictures. There is, for example, the "Oak-and-Ash" design by Mr. Heywood Sumner; and Mr. Walter Crane has given us the "Orange Tree" design, the



THE APPLE WALL-PAPER

Designed by WILLIAM MORRIS

MORRIS & Co., London



SUNFLOWER WALL-PAPER, SHOWING A GOOD CON-
VENTIONAL TREATMENT OF NATURAL FORM

Designed by WILLIAM MORRIS

Made by MORRIS & Co., London

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“Oak Decoration,” and the “Meadow Pattern with the May Tree Frieze.” These names are all realistic, but the work is duly conventional, spirited and good, forming a background by itself. This applies also to several designs by Mr. Allan F. Vigers, as in the case of his “Mallow Wall-Paper.”

But I do not recommend any pattern whatever, because a room has to be treated in relation to its shape, size, and light, and to the special needs of a tenant. Still, I can warn you against a theory which has been in vogue for some time. There are writers who say that big patterns look well on the walls of little rooms, and this theory, a few years ago, flooded the market with startling papers, covered with gigantic poppies and other dropsical designs. Some large patterns, when printed in very quiet tints, *do* look well in small rooms ; but as a rule, no doubt, they dwarf small apartments. They may prove a designer's cleverness, but do they add to the comfort of villas and flats ?

No writer can get away from his own art training ; there are schools of taste as well as of thought ; but I do believe that ordinary rooms would gain very much if a fear for patterns were as common as a fear for poisons.

Devotees of pattern might try to learn that there is safety and pleasure in uniform tints of good colour, above all when they value pictures. This does not mean that no pattern is right behind a good picture, but it must be very *silent* to be right, giving to the

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wall surface only an enriched tone, not a repetition of a definite design. G. F. Watts liked a red background, and many other artists employ the same colour in various rich tints, while some experts find all they need in warm grays or in common brown paper. Then, as to a good background for water-colour drawings, the best one in pattern known to me is in the house of a great collector—a house with very large rooms; the ground is a warm grey, and upon it a formal Venetian design is printed lightly and delicately in primrose yellow heightened with gold. The effect is enough to give variety to the large walls, but not enough to draw attention from exquisitely delicate pictures by Turner, and fine drawings by other masters, like Girtin, Cox, De Wint, and Barret. These pictures, again, are hung *in panels*; that is, they are formed into groups or clusters, with vacant plots of wall surface between them. All the pictures in one cluster harmonise, so the vigorous painters are found in one group, the delicate masters in another, and their styles and methods are thus open to a criticism of comparisons.

CHAPTER III

WALLS AND THEIR TREATMENT (*continued*)

BEFORE we pass on to another kind of work in mural decoration, it will be well to sum up the conclusions at which we have arrived thus far, because the most important question in household art centres about the words "realism" and "convention." Realism in art is an attempt to get near to Nature, while convention as applied to design is a recognition of the fact that the purpose of ornament is to adorn useful things in a way that accords artistically with their use and technically with the special qualities of their materials. Wood must be treated as wood, and metal as metal, and the treatment must bring out the qualities of each wood and of each metal, while fitting every useful thing for its object or purpose. Paintings, again, must not look like tapestries, nor tapestries like paintings. All crafts have their own methods and their own limited means of being loyal to certain forms of beauty which they alone can represent; hence one craft cannot imitate another without harming its own merits and failing to attain those which belong to the other craft. With these facts in mind the following points may be summarised:

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1. There are two forms of painting; one is distinguished from the other by its title, Decorative Painting; and this shows that when pictorial art is used for ornamental purposes, as in mural work, it differs from that art as shown to us in framed pictures, or in pictures hung within niches or recesses. These may be as realistic as the imitations of art can make them, because they are separate and detached works to be employed for indefinite purposes; that is to say, a painter of easel pictures cannot foresee how his pictures will be hung by their owners. Such pictures may be bought and sold scores of times in a hundred years, so their artists may be as independently original as they please, since they do not work in accordance with any given scheme of room decoration. That is the rule, as any painter will tell you. But in mural painting—namely, in pictures either painted *on* walls or upon canvas to be fixed on walls—the matter is very different, artists knowing what they have to do in known buildings and for definite purposes. Their duty is to ornament a wall surface with certain subjects approved by their patrons, and common sense tells them that their ornament must *assert the wall*; that is, preserve the solid look essential to a wall, and must therefore keep clear of a realism which, by imitating great distances, would make the wall seem transparent. We look *through* a picture; we look *on* a wall painting. In the one the eye takes journeys; in the other it rests on a decoration that seems to be organically a part of a wall's solid and flat

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surface. This, you will see, is convention, and it needs from a painter great knowledge and self-discipline.

2. Fine tapestries have some qualities of design which are akin to those in good mural paintings, their perspective and their subjects being conventionalised, and therefore within the proper limits of duly considered decorative work. If a tapestry maker tries to vie with the historical painter, as many did after the Reformation, he succeeds only in doing badly what historical painters do well, for nothing vague or indeterminate can be reproduced with success by the technique of real tapestry. On the other hand, a many-tinted patterning of well-defined shapes can be weaved with infinitely varied results; and as the warp in real tapestry is hidden, in contradistinction to mechanical weaving, the colours are as solid as they are in painting. The best tapestries are all mediæval, those of the Renaissance being too realistic. The realism here is bad, not because it is realism, but because it is applied to a form of art which neither needs it nor is able to represent its finer qualities.

3. One searching test of all decorative work is the question: "Could this be done better in some other form of art?" If so, then the work is not logically right for the purpose which it is intended to serve.

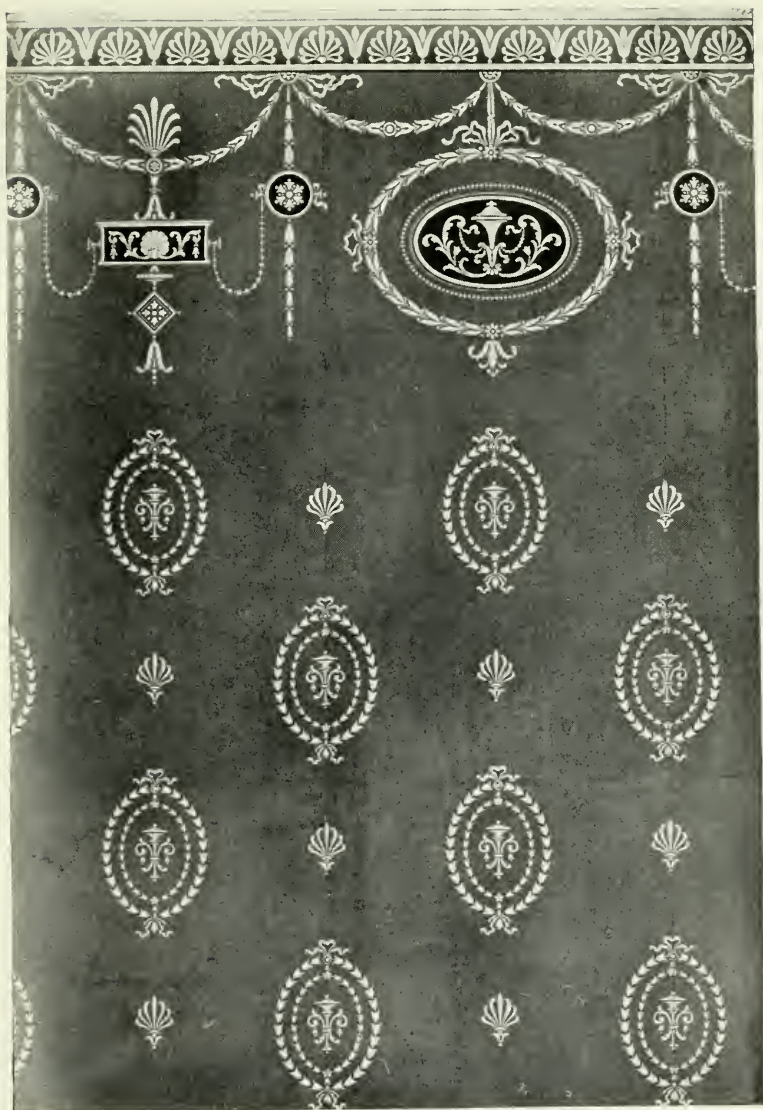
4. Apply this to everything in your own home, from the patterned carpet to the wall-paper, and from any wooden box enriched with carving, to the window-curtains.

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5. Here is another test question : “ Is that ornament really essential, or does it increase the cost of production without adding beauty to a useful thing ? ” A correct reply to this query would condemn many patterns on wall-papers, many designs on carpets and curtains, and much inlaid work on modern furniture.

6. What is a wall-paper ? It is a popular makeshift, a democratic substitute for such costly work as tapestries, mural paintings, stamped leather, and carved panelling. The earliest records of wall-paper belong, I believe, to the sixteenth century ; but peasants at a much earlier date got similar effects with stencilled patterns and whitewash, with archil and limewash to make a deep blue tint, or with simple drab colours ; and where the walls joined the slanting roof or the ceiling a frieze pattern in waved lines was put, with spots of colour in the valleys formed by the lines. The Anglo-Saxons liked yellow and blue for their walls, and these tints continued in use to a comparatively late time. Yellow-ochre was a favourite colour in Yorkshire ; and the ancient Romans also were fond of it as a wall decoration. Umber is mentioned, too, mixed with a clay wash ; and sometimes light green won a preferential vogue, as in Derbyshire, where copperas was dissolved in limewash. Also, “ before the introduction of wall-papers it was usual to decorate the walls with patterns, such as green leaves with rather indistinct stems. This was done by means of a contrivance resembling a large stencil plate. The practice is ancient, whether the

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THE PORTLAND DECORATION
For XVIII. Century styles of furniture
JEFFREY & Co., Mortimer St., London



JAPANESE EMBOSSED LEATHER PAPER

Made in Japan from Messrs. Morris's own design

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stencil plate was used anciently or not. The regulations of the *Feste di Pui* in London, provided that the room for the feast was not to be hung with cloth of gold, or silk, or tapestry, but decorated with leaves and (the floor) strewn with rushes.”*

7. Note that these ancestors of wall-papers were nothing more than surface decorations, the patterns stencilled in flat tints through a large plate. Thus the leaves and stems were not realistic, but decorative, conventional; and this ancient tradition is found to-day in the best patterned wall-papers.

8. Have faith in flat tints of uniform colour, and remember that a wall-paper is very bad if it interferes with the essential characteristics of a wall: flatness, solidity, and uprightness.

9. Be always on your guard against patterns, because they are more likely to be wrong than right, either wrong in themselves, or wrong for a quiet scheme of room decoration. Even artists get into difficulties when patterns enter largely into their house furnishing.

10. Realistic patterns should be avoided: they are like the headlines in popular newspapers, blatant and assertive.

11. If the design on a wall-paper is quite distinctly seen when you enter the door of a room, it is out of keeping with that room, attracting so much attention that it cannot keep its place on the wall surface, and be a good background.

* “Evolution of the English House.” By S. O. Addy. Pp. 122-124.

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12. Large patterns printed in gay colours, however attractive in a shop window, are (as a rule) too vivid for home use, unless you think that wall-papers and window curtains are more important than a whole room with its family life. Such patterns are like advertisements, which say so much that cautious folk do not believe in their manifold brilliance of style and self-assertion.

13. *Some* large patterns, when formal in design, and *very* quiet in uniform flat tints of good colour, look well on the walls of small rooms.

14. Small designs may be too assertive, as much so as many which are too big, just as in books the eye may be attracted as much by small italics as by large print: a fact which advertisers are slow to recognise. Put a neat square of tiny italics in the middle of a newspaper page, and it will attract far more attention than a great deal of information printed in large capitals: and some wall-papers have the same effect in mural decorations. Their pattern is so diminutive that the eye is teased by it.

15. Patterns of a medium size are the best for average rooms and households; and to test their decorative value you have but to stand at the door of your room and look at several sample lengths pinned to the wall at the far end. If the patterns are too large or too small they will attract too much attention; if they are right in size, and their colour is quiet and good, they will ornament the wall surface in a pleasant manner, and you will have no wish to examine them minutely at a yard's distance.

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When you feel tempted to take particular notice of a wall-paper, it is likely to be out of keeping with the rest of your room, because the duty of a background is to be a sleeping partner in your decorative scheme, not an active and energetic helper.

16. Patterns are common in decorative art because designers cannot earn money out of self-coloured wall-papers and textile fabrics; and so they have much to say about the pleasure that patterns give to those who are jaded by the struggle for life. It is their duty to fight thus for their own livelihood. Nevertheless, wall-papers in uniform tints are pleasant and restful when their colours are good. They remind me of that friendly talk in expressive silences which took place one evening between Carlyle and Emerson, causing both of them to say that their enjoyment had been complete. No arguments, no disputed opinions; but a bickering fire, and plenty of good tobacco, and sympathy, and long spells of comforting silence. What could be more eloquent than that? And it is even so with room decoration, where silence—that is, an absence of pattern—is charmingly expressive. Try it on your walls, try it in your curtains; and make the first experiments in your bedrooms, because patterns are apt to be very annoying during a time of illness. I can still remember what I suffered as a child during a long sickness in bed, when a paper covered with realistic flowers and trailing plants forced me to count and recount all the items in the horrible designs.

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17. A paperhanging should not repeat the colour of the carpet, but oppose it, and form pleasant contrasts with the furniture and curtains. If all the dominant colours in a room, both warm and cold, are repeated in the carpet, as will often happen when Oriental work covers the floor, the scheme is good; but some persons think that the most important condition of good taste is fulfilled when every piece of furniture is made from the same wood, when all the textile fabrics in a room are cut from the same piece, and when the walls and the floor “match.” Some ladies employ tints of the same colour throughout a room, because they do not *see* and *feel* that the secret of success in polychrome decoration depends on effective contrast as much as on similarity of tint. It is essential to a real artistic result that colours warm and cold should be in harmonious opposition to each other. (See the chapter “On Colour.”)

18. Some good designers shade the tints that form patterns on their wall-papers, but the effects thus obtained should be criticised with great care. Why? Because shaded ornament and pattern, when distributed over the flat surface of a wall, may give the appearance of perspective or of relief; hence they are apt to be too realistic for mural decoration. Where natural forms are introduced—fruits, leaves, flowers, birds, and so forth—the treatment must be conventional—namely, drawn in outline and filled in with uniform flat colour, which may be hatched over with lines here and there to express emphasis of form, but without the slightest

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attempt to gradate the colour in a pictorial way. This may be taken as a safe rule for householders to follow. Sometimes it is broken with success by men of genius, but a handbook cannot speak of exceptions.

19. Notice those paperhangings in which there are only two tints of one good colour, the pattern being only a little darker than the ground. These are good backgrounds for pictures, particularly in those households where plain wall-papers are not liked.

20. Notice the flock paperhangings, because in them realistic designs cannot be imitated.

21. The simplest patterns are usually the best for all purposes; but when the eye has to look at the wall alone, when the paper is to be a decorative background by itself, without pictures, a greater play of line is warranted in the patterns, and it is evident that delicate tints admit of a linear complexity which would be too assertive and troublesome if printed in vivid, rich colours. All intricate forms need quiet, silent colour; and when designers appeal to us with a variety of bright hues, their outlines and patterns cannot be too modest.*

22. Much attention was given at one time to diapered patterns for wall-papers and carpets; and although they

* There is no need to mention here the cleanliness of whitewash, and the utility of plain distemper washes, but I should like to draw attention to the Silicate Water Paint, "Duresco," made by J. B. Orr & Co., Charlton, London, S E. Some of the tints are not useful for walls, but others are, and the prices are reasonable, ranging from 30s. to 40s. the hundredweight. Hall's Washable Distemper is another good and useful thing.

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were “done to death,” as the phrase runs, a good many of them were attractive and useful. A diaper is a simple ornament enclosed by bounding lines, or divided into shapes of a uniform size throughout; sometimes geometrical shapes, quatrefoils, rounds, squares, octagons, &c. The best are those which measure nearly the same in breadth, as in length; and for ordinary-sized rooms they should not exceed five or six inches across, in any direction, while for bedrooms and bathrooms much less will suffice. Bedrooms, indeed, are better *without* patterned walls.

23. Never choose a wall-paper having a scroll pattern: it soon fatigues the eye.

24. Remember that no paper should reach from the cornice to the skirting. However good a thing may be, *Toujours perdrix* is a maxim to be remembered—if we wish to get away from monotony.

25. A quiet frieze, separated from the wall-paper by a moulding or a picture rail, is necessary, but the frieze patterns often sold with wall-papers are detestable—not always, but often. Not many of us can afford to have a plaster frieze by Mr. Bankart, but certainly we can afford, in our small rooms, to keep the frieze panel silent, unobtrusive.

26. Some paper friezes are good, and good friezes stamped or moulded in relief may be bought from the manufacturers, but no definite rule can be given for their choice. The only guidance which can be given is this: that unrest in a frieze design is bad, and this

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point cannot be decided, even in work by the best men, unless you try a length of the frieze *in situ* on your walls.

27. At the beginning of the last century a good effect was produced in rooms by a dado of white panelling about three feet high, which had a pretty look through the perforated backs of chairs. The dado was crowned with a little wooden moulding quite simple in contour ; and above it a wall-paper stretched to the frieze or to the cornice. This happy use of a wainscot was a modification of a very old practice, for the tradition of English panelling goes back to the times of Henry III., who was particularly fond of painted wainscots, with a frieze above them, his favourite scheme of colour being green spangled with gold stars. Fir-wood usually was chosen for this purpose, possibly because it was cheaper than oak and easier to work ; a good deal of fir was imported from Norway, so that tree was not a common one in the great English forests of the thirteenth century. Henry III. made some attempts at ornamental patterns, as in the twenty-first year of his reign, when he ordered the clerk of the works at Windsor to toil day and night on the wainscot of one chamber, using “ boards radiated and coloured.” From this event the use of panelling may be followed to the linen pattern wainscots of Tudor times, thence to the oak walls in Elizabethan mansions onward to the white-panelled walls in the Queen Anne houses (so-called) ; and thence we pass to the pleasant narrow dados which Englishmen liked early in the

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nineteenth century. These might be revived to-day, at no great expense, even in small houses, since common woods might be used successfully.

28. Modern dados are often made with an embossed composition that resembles plaster to some extent, and when the pattern work is good and quiet, not tiny and fussy, no objection can be raised to this method. Only, and let me underline this fact, the designs which you may see are often of no more service to the walls than a cook's ornamentation is of service to a bridal cake. For this reason, ask for work by good designers: and remember always that a catalogue should be like a publisher's list of books, where the authors' names are never forgotten.

29. Some tradesmen are very mysterious over the authors of *their* publications, as if they added to their own worth by suppressing the names of artists and craftsmen. "Trade secrets" are not to be permitted in such matters: the public has a right to know by whom the designs are made, since the public pays for the work; and it is clearly unjust that artists of ability should be lost in a commercial enterprise to which their talents are essential. As well suppress the names of playwrights and actors, or assign pictures to those who buy them. This question lies at the foundation of success in the household arts. We have in England only one school for a public taste in those arts, namely, our manufacturing system; it starts every popular fashion, and it carries on every movement of steady progress,

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most householders pretending that they have not the time to learn those first principles of decorative work which would enable them to lead "the trade," instead of following it. Those who follow can never hope to lead : they start behind and remain in the rear inevitably. Is that a good position for the public to hold in its relation to the household arts ? Surely the real paymasters, the British people, should rule actively, and not be passive servants to the artistic trades ? If so, then every householder should expect to find in all catalogues the names of the modern artists who are responsible for the designs and colours ; and, further, when old styles are revived, trade catalogues should give the opinion of a first-rate connoisseur, like Mr. Lethaby, Mr. Heywood Sumner, Mr. Walter Crane, or Mr. Reginald Blomfield. Revivals should carry passports. Bad floral patterns from early Victorian textiles may cheer gardeners who are out of work, but their present revival is a glaring folly.

How necessary these matters are from a public standpoint will become plain if you bear in mind that the furniture of an ordinary house frequently costs as much as the house itself, and again, that the artistic manufactures are not subject to the newspaper criticism that attends the public sale of books, the exhibition of pictures in public, and the acting of plays in public theatres. In all these matters the people are guided by a criticism so varied and so thorough that authors and actors are under constant discipline and supervision.

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Why? Is the harm which they can do as costly to the public as bad work in the home arts? Surely not. Has not Mr. Birrell said that a single bad plumber may do in a year more public mischief than all the bad authors of a century? Botched work in all household essentials has a harmful effect that lasts for a long time; and one marvels that while authors and publishers of books and plays are criticised in hundreds of newspapers, the publishers and authors engaged in other trades are subject to no discipline, but advertise their work—carpets, textiles, furniture, wall-papers—with complete freedom, as though in these important matters the public needed no help at all.

The position is, of course, absurd. We need a police of furniture as well as a police of books and plays. Meantime we must assert ourselves in all dealings with the artistic trades, declining to accept any design unaccompanied by its author's name. It is a public duty to save clever artists and craftsmen from being chilled to death by unjust "trade secrets."

It is extremely difficult to give hints on household taste, not because the authorities are few, but because a writer is stopped at every point by annoying questions. "But how can *that* be applied by any reader to the present condition of trade? What fashion is now paraded in the shop windows, and how long is it likely to be in commercial vogue?"

Questions of this kind are troublesome when walls and their treatment are under consideration. There is

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real progress in some popular arts, as in wooden furniture, but not (as a rule) in wall-papers and textiles. Here the tides of fashion ebb and flow, bringing with them much wreckage from the past. For all that, good things may be discovered by any person who keeps in mind the guiding principles of applied art which this book tries to renew and explain.

Textile fabrics are excellent as a covering for walls. They look well between a simple dado and a good frieze,* particularly when their texture is strong and their colour uniform. Texture is invaluable because it gives variety to a flat surface. Light plays upon it attractively, and colour looks uneven, broken, diversified; and when textiles fade a little their tints are often more pleasing than fresher hues. Canvas, too, is a good wall-hanging, and common ticking also. Gild them carefully, and then varnish the gold with a thin glazing of ivory black. The varnish should not be a rapid dryer, and black should be used in unequal quantities, so that the glaze may be unevenly tinted. With a handful of linen formed into a pad, remove the glaze here and there, leaving the black tint settled in the interstices. Black is a good toning glaze over any gilded surface that looks in the least pretentious; and, of course, the aim in gilded canvas or ticking is to get a varied and a dull-toned brilliance. This forms a

* Experts often ridicule the dado and frieze, speaking of them as "formulas" and "superficial conceits"; but they are essential in the houses we rent, and with care they are made useful and effective.

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good background for pictures, but the frames should be brown or black.

Another good effect may be obtained with inexpensive canvas sized to the walls, *the wrong side* being kept as a ground for paint. On this surface a good house painter can work either in flat tints or in transparent colours. The pigment should be rubbed briskly into the surface, just as pictures were "laid in" with monochrome in Hogarth's time and later. Years ago I saw the walls of a room coloured in this way by a Belgian artist, and with great success. The canvas was prepared with a rubbing of yellow ochre and raw sienna; this being dry, blue and transparent browns were dragged over it so as to get broken tints; and when this preparation was firmly set and hard, a thin glaze of black was put on with a little burnt sienna as a fillip. The aim throughout was to show the yellow ground through the super-imposed broken tints, just as paper shows through water-colours giving them a translucent brilliancy. That wall made an excellent background for pictures, which were hung between a good panelled dado and a painted frieze; still, the work was done by an artist for his own pleasure, and not by an artisan in constant anxiety about the coming of his meal times.

A great many young painters at the present time might give thought to mural decoration, with advantage both to themselves and to those of us who have built houses for our own use. Modern pictures do not sell, and hundreds of young men and women find it no easy

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task to pay for their frames, colours, canvases, and studios. In addition to these unfortunates, there are scores of clever amateurs who have passed through the art schools, and who with practice might do excellent decorative work. But there is one drawback to this practical suggestion. Young artists are apt to believe that it is better to run into debt as makers of easel pictures than to earn a modest regular income by decorating walls. The same belief was in vogue when I was an art student, first at the Slade School under Professor Legros, and then at the Brussels Academy under Professor Portaels; and perhaps it may be attributed to the same English feeling that finds a class distinction between poor wages as a clerk and good wages as a carpenter. One day, we may be sure, the logic of hunger will kill those distinctions. It is better and nobler to put a fine tint of colour on the walls of a room than to turn out little easel pictures which no one will buy.

A new profession is indeed waiting to be recognised. Young painters, fresh from the schools, should form themselves into practical firms, into working partnerships; each little set would need a studio, and the local press would enable them to advertise. It would be necessary to keep away from high ambitions and to think carefully of the needs of householders. The work would include frieze painting, stencilled decoration, plain decoration in schemes of flatted colour, the choice of wall-papers for halls and rooms, the making of

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designs, the selection of furniture, and many other things which, if done well with a keen enthusiasm necessary to all art workers, would be useful at a moderate price to a great many families. Each little group of artists would require an architect to govern it, and a thorough knowledge of decorative design would be essential.

Yet there is one real difficulty. Artists do not unite together like men of business. They are individualists : each stands apart from his fellow, and has no wish to be a unit in a fighting regiment. He would rather fail as a lonely scout. On several occasions I have listened to a few artists discussing a projected society of work, and in each case they saw the practical scheme from so many points of view that it became hopelessly unworkable ; indeed, they soon lost their wish to carry it out, all their enthusiasm having escaped in talk, like steam through a kettle's spout.

Something, though, must be done ; young artists cannot live on unsold pictures and statues ; and this fact may in time develop a practical habit of mind, like that which is being encouraged by the Art Workers' Guild and the Home Arts and Industries Association. There is certainly scope for decorative household work ; and the public money spent on the art schools ought to be useful in a public manner. At present it brings a poor return, just because there is no organisation that even attempts to put a backbone of business common sense into the aims of students.

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Meantime the home arts are carried on mainly by men of affairs. Even architects fail to make it known that they are prepared to give advice on all questions relating to the equipment of houses; so that people have come to look upon them as the authors of new buildings, too busy or too proud to give advice on furnishing. It is a great pity. Most architects would find it worth their while to have "consulting hours," like doctors, so as to give their experience in return for known fees. You are in doubt what colours go best with oak furniture, let us say. Points of this kind are debated for hours and days by many households, when a good architect could answer them in a few minutes. Would it not be worth your while to pay a guinea for such advice, or five guineas if the architect came to see your rooms? An attack of influenza would cost you more and leave nothing at all pleasant as a memorial. It is a point to be considered. As no reasonable man would ask a builder to design a house for him, so no one should allow an upholsterer to furnish and decorate a house except under the advice of an expert, an architect. Not that the expert should govern his client; on the contrary, his duty is to guide, so that his client may have a home that represents his own needs, hobbies, and tastes.

I have just consulted an architect myself, wishing to give here some practical information on panelled walls, a matter of great interest to those who own the houses in which they live and who find that the walls are

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not sound-proof, but communicative as telephones. This familiar result of bad building would be improved by panels, which, though a good conductor of sound, can be fitted in ways to "deafen" walls and ceilings, as by laying a strip of good thick felt along the top and bottom of each panel so as to prevent contact between the wood and the surface behind it. To stop the transmission of sounds from one part of a building to another is difficult, but perhaps the best way is to employ materials which are not homogeneous; and hence a panelled covering to defective walls may be recommended to house-owners.*

Oak panelling is attractive to all Englishmen, though little British oak is used for that work to-day. Nearly fifty species of oak are known, but the common British kind is the toughest and the most enduring, only it is so cross-grained that cabinetmakers fear it and choose instead an imported oak, like the wainscot from Holland, straight-grained and softer to work, taking a more delicate finish, and having altogether a less intractable "nature," for it is less likely to crack and warp. Turkey oak has much in common with the Dutch wainscot, while the American variety, known as white

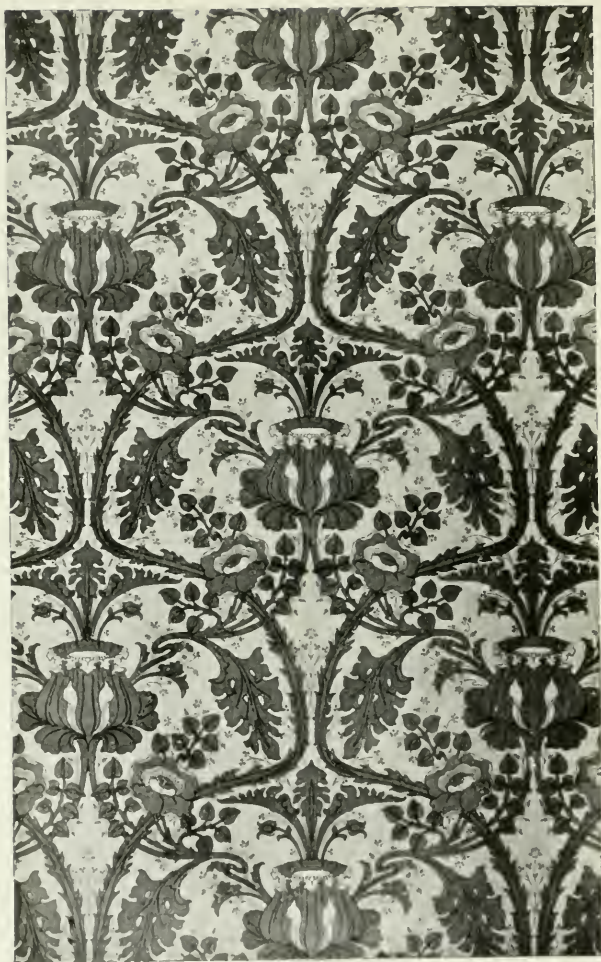
* It has been found that walls composed of hard and soft bricks are more sound proof than those which are built of hard bricks alone. Bedroom walls ought to be double, and have between them a little space filled with sand and gravel. In the thin party-walls of a builder's house, it is often useful to put a lining of felt: it does some good.



THE "NEO-GREC" DECORATION

Designed by LEWIS F. DAY

JEFFREY & Co., Mortimer Street, Regent Street, London



THE "MATADOR" STAIRCASE PAPER

JEFFREY & Co., Mortimer Street, Regent Street, London

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oak, now largely used in cabinet-making and for interior fittings, has different qualities. "It is not equal to the British oak in strength or durability," says Mr. Stephen Webb, "and it is inferior to the wainscot in the beauty of its markings. The better the quality of this oak, the more it shrinks in drying."

It is well known that timber architecture is a special study requiring a long experience. Some architects are experts in wainscoting, like Mr. Walter Cave, Mr. E. L. Lutyens, and Mr. John Cash; it is the last-named artist who sends me the following information:

"Oak panelling varies much in price. The least expensive is American oak, but it does not take the fuming process, and liquid stain not only tends to spoil the grain, but darken the soft parts of the wood much more than the hard parts, and this makes unpleasant contrasts. When it is made very dark the contrasts are less noticeable; that is why all the cheap oak-work is made very deep-toned. The figure of American oak is generally coarse when the wood is not simply straight-grained and without figure. But, despite these well-known defects, American oak looks comfortable in a room, and there is no *after* expense worth mentioning.

"Austrian oak has better markings, it takes the fuming process well, but costs more. The least expensive panelling in American oak is 1s. 6d. per foot fixed in London, but something will always have to be added for fitting in odd corners.

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“Take a room 18 ft. by 16 ft. and 10 ft. high, the panelling to be 8 ft. high, with a plaster frieze and ceiling above ; oak door and architraves, a mantelpiece of American oak, and of simple design. The window-frames and sashes would be deal, not to be counted in our estimate ; but we should put an oak architrave and window board :

	£	s.	d.
Panelling	41	0	0
Chimney-piece	2	0	0
Door and Architrave	4	0	0
Window board and Architrave	1	10	0
Fixing	5	0	0
	<hr/>		
Total	£53	10	0

“The chimney-piece would be just a simple moulding and shelf fixed on the panelling.

“A dado of soft wood, properly painted, would cost as much as the cheap American oak.

“The least costly ceiling is one of plaster in ribs, made to pattern and perhaps enriched. Timber ceilings are attractive, but in flats they are troublesome to put up, for flats are built as a rule with concrete floors, so a timber ceiling has to be planted on, and this, of course, is unstructural as well as costly.”*

For the rest, I am giving some illustrations to show the treatment of walls, but patterned designs convey a false impression in a book, because their tone and *scale* cannot be shown on a small page, not even when

* Notes supplied by John Cash, F.R.I.B.A.

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colour-plates are given. That is why art magazines often deceive the public. Their illustrations *must* be patterns represented in little blocks, and the public fancies that nothing without pattern counts in decorative art. Let me then say that no patterned scheme should be undertaken by householders without professional advice; and let me add to this the expediency of going to one shop where good designs may be seen in various articles of furniture, carpets, curtains, pottery, friezes, and wall-papers. If all this work shows the taste and knowledge of one acknowledged expert, as in the case of the late William Morris, the difficulties of choice are lessened, because a definite style is common to all of it.

Two architects of to-day, Mr. Voysey and Mr. Baillie Scott, have formed styles of their own in room decoration, designing everything necessary, from chairs and tables to carpets, wall-papers, and window-curtains. Also—and this has importance—they have built many small houses and know from long experience the needs of limited incomes. Hence they are artists to be consulted, and I have no doubt that they would give professional advice and suggestions by letter, if you sent them your requirements, giving the size and shape of your rooms, the position of the windows, the quantity of the light in each room, and the kind of furniture you have bought.

Many architects are specialists in distinctive ways, like Mr. Lorimer, Mr. E. L. Lutyens, Mr. Walter Cave,

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Mr. Arnold Mitchell, Mr. Ernest George, Mr. E. Guy Dawber, Mr. Ernest Newton, Mr. Gerald C. Horsley, Mr. Horace Field, Mr. E. J. May, Mr. Charles Spooner, Mr. W. H. Brierley (of York), Mr. Halsey Ricardo, Mr. W. H. Bidlake (Birmingham), Mr. R. W. Schultz, Mr. F. W. Troup, Mr. Cash, and many others. Indeed, good guides are easy to find—if householders wish to consult them, and their work may be studied in several books, concerning which information will be given by Mr. B. T. Batsford, High Holborn, London.

CHAPTER IV

FLOORS AND THEIR TREATMENT

Carpets.

IT was in the thirteenth century that carpets were brought to England, the importers being Eleanor of Castile and the Spanish ambassadors who arranged her marriage to Edward, the eldest son of Henry III. When Eleanor arrived at Westminster she found that her apartments were draped with rich hangings, like a church, and carpeted also, after the fashion of her own country. All this appears quite natural to us, but the great historian of those times, Matthew Paris, relates how London citizens were annoyed by the introduction of Spanish customs and manners, which had not the rough manliness that Englishmen valued. The ambassadors were ridiculed. It was noticed that while their lodgings at the Temple were hung with silk and beautiful tapestry, and the very floors carpeted in a splendid manner, their retinue was vulgar and disorderly, and had few horses and many mules.

Time passed, but the English dislike for carpets and wall-hangings remained, though Henry III. was delighted to receive all good hints on household art and

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taste. Some kind of tapestry was in occasional use even among the Saxons and the Normans, over doorways, usually, or to divide one part of a chamber from another ; but real tapestries, the figured "arras," were not made until the fourteenth century, although the looms of Arras were famous two hundred years earlier for the making of cloths fitted for church vestments and for wearing apparel. Very fine embroidered draperies were made in England for Henry III., particularly by Mabel of Bury St. Edmund's, a true artist in needlework ; but these embroideries were used not for domestic purposes, but for sacerdotal vestments, the decoration of tombs and altars, and the embellishment of church walls. Coloured wainscoting, with a painted frieze above it, was the thirteenth-century method of English mural ornament ; and the national carpets then, and for many generations afterwards, were rushes and straw during the autumn and winter, and green fodder in the spring and summer. This explains the fact mentioned by Matthew Paris, that the Spanish customs brought to England by Eleanor of Castile were thought at variance with English habits and manners ; and there was, no doubt, a wide difference between panelled rooms covered with rushes and Eleanor's weaved carpets and splendid tapestries.

In the fourteenth century some carpets were made at Ramsey in Huntingdonshire, but these were used mainly for church decoration, it is believed. Parlours, it is true, were sometimes carpeted, but verses of the

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period sneer at them as "Tapets of Spayne" laid down for "pompe and pryde." A bedroom mentioned in the "Story of Thebes" has a floor covered with cloth of gold, a rare departure indeed from the conservatism of English household customs. It was between the reigns of Henry V. (1413-1422) and Henry VII. (1485-1509) that carpets came timidly into fashion among the well-to-do, ousting rushes and straw and grass from the floors of private chambers, but not in the Great Common Halls, where such litter was often trampled under foot as late as the times of Henry VIII.

Rushes were not used because of their cheapness. In 1464 Sir John Howard put sixteen pence-worth of rushes on his parlour floor, a sum equal to at least sixteen shillings in our money; and this high price for a convenience so easily dirtied was the cause of much uncleanness. Even the rich allowed the rushes to get sodden and filthy, so the main floor of a hall—the part below the raised dais—was mentioned in some documents as the *marsh*, an expressive word. Grass and straw must have been more perishable even than rushes, particularly when carts with provisions drove down the central aisle of a hall, as at Winchester. For rooms on the ground-floor were rarely boarded even as late as the thirteenth century, though wood flooring was common then in the upper rooms of good houses.

It is worth while to consider these old national customs and traditions, because they suggest ideas. It is clear that our ancestors of the Middle Ages would

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not be hurried in the improvement of their home life, but preferred inherited discomforts to new and necessary luxuries; and this hard conservatism was very bad for women and children. Are *we* wiser, do you think? During the last century there was a persistent decline of good workmanship in all homes except those that the well-to-do put up for themselves. Jerry-builders could not have won their disgraceful reputation had they been opposed by the English people. Nor is it uninteresting to note that the advance in sanitation has been dictated by law, not by popular common sense or mother-wit. Had the people been left to themselves, as in Brittany, their methods of sanitation would still be primitive, almost mediæval.

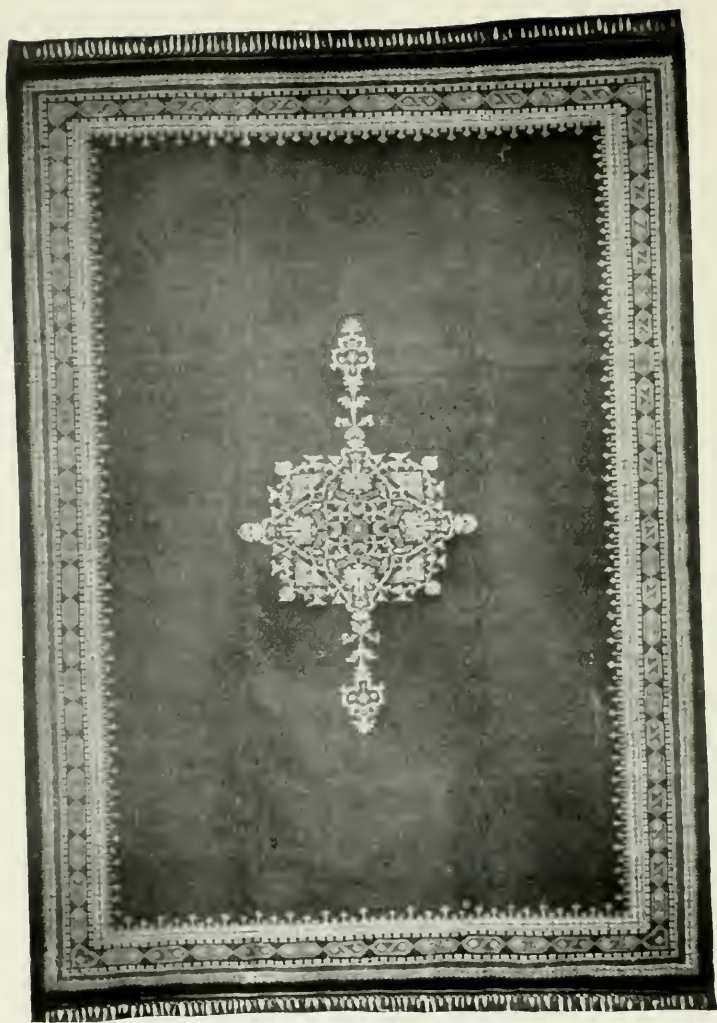
What we need more than anything at the present time is a popular feeling similar to that surprise and contempt which many writers express for mediæval ways of life. A jerry-built villa with its ill-made furniture is more an object of contempt than a rush-strewn hall of the thirteenth century with an open drain flowing down the middle; for the hall was so well-constructed that it was used for generations after the rushes gave place to coloured tiles and the open drain to a sewer underground. Our jerry-built suburbs have but one redeeming feature: they will soon wear out. It is an education to be ashamed of them.

But a toleration for discomfort is not the only characteristic that we share with our mediæval forefathers. We have a liking for colours that they admired. The



ENGLISH REPRODUCTION OF A FINE INDIAN CARPET

Messrs. STORY & Co., Kensington, London



TURKEY CARPET
Messrs. STORR & Co., Kensington, London

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tints of their grass-carpets are to be seen to-day in weaved hearthrugs and in other floor-coverings; and sometimes the grassy greens are flecked with a white patterning as though to imitate daisies. Irish carpets, too, have the same verdure tints, and an effort is being made to introduce other light-green textiles. It is a mistake, for reasons already given on page 80.

Recently I saw a very wonderful grass-green carpet in which all the elementary principles of decorative art were vulgarised out of being. The border was festooned with roses, every one of them in shaded colours so that they might seem not unlike real roses patterned over the sides; and in the centre was a large wreath of the same flowers, also in shaded tints, and big enough to form garlands for the manufacturer and his "expert" designer. Now the effect of shaded colouring is to give roundness to natural objects, one quality which is altogether out of place on a floor; and it is clear also that nothing realistic should be under our feet. To walk over roses on a carpet is not only foolish but contemptible; as well might we tread upon a patterning of babies' faces. In early Victorian days, when wall-papers represented bits of ornamental gardens, groups of foreign birds, large creeping plants and huge flowers, there were carpets to set children screaming, and noble hearthrugs too, with spaniels worked upon them. Is it not astonishing how decadent modern progress can be? If carpets may represent flowers, why should they not depict something more educational, like the battle of Trafalgar

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or the latest types of naval architecture? The sea and its great ships would be as convenient to walk upon as a garden of roses.*

Happily some English carpets are good in design, like the Kidderminsters, the Wiltons, the "Arbadils," sold by Waring and Gillow, and the Turkey carpets made by Maple and Co. at Smyrna. Then there are the hand-made "Hammersmith" carpets which the late William Morris introduced, and which are still made.

Even in carpets at a very popular price, modest diapers may be discovered, as well as other simple and decorative patterns. The plainest diapered grounds are the best, and the prevailing tint should contrast that of your wall-paper, and not repeat it. This point has been mentioned before (p. 132), but it cannot be stated too many times, because many men and a great many women do not understand the value of contrast in a colour-scheme.

A young journalist was once advised never to send in "copy" to a second-rate newspaper or magazine, but to aim always at the top rank. The same advice may be given here to those who need carpets: go to the leading shops and manufacturers. It is better in the long run, though it may seem expensive now. A good carpet not only wears for many years without being worn,

* A London shop has a rare example of misplaced realism on a complete service of bedroom ware, upon the surface of which pears of a natural size are painted.

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but keeps in fashion with all changes of good household taste. It never becomes out of date and unsightly.

Oriental carpets and rugs are the finest, not in colour only but in design and finish. Their colour, indeed, has some disadvantages; we should be on our guard against their black dyes and their brilliant crimsons, for they have a bad action on textile fabrics, causing them to wear out. This applies particularly, I believe, to Indian textiles, but a rule of safety may include both Turkish and Persian work. Choose carpets and rugs without much black in them, and with pleasant reds in a low key.

But the great charm of Oriental weaving is the inimitable aptness of the designs. There is nothing to vex the eye. The ornament seems to be uniform, and yet it has no trace of that mechanical neatness and correctness which in European carpets have a rule-and-compass symmetry, quite different from the vigour and the freedom which belong to a genuine handicraft. Manual arts are filled with inequalities, "accidents," as painters call them, and if you examine a Persian rug or carpet you will find that the balancing patterns vary, and that the border strips have nothing more than a family likeness. The exterior edges are seldom, if ever, straight. To be even is not to be artistic. This truth has been known to Oriental craftsmen for a great many generations; and although Western trading customs have started to debauch their work, they are still our betters in ornamental design and colour. So many

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inspirations have come to us from the East that English householders should have faith in this one also. To improve their homes they have only to accustom their eyes to Eastern pottery and textile fabrics.

Carpet-weaving arose among tribesmen who lived in tents, and who would not have understood the degraded use of their art as a maker of floor-cloths to be trodden under foot by unclean boots and shoes. Orientals do not enter a room or a tent without taking off their shoes, while we, though living under the latest guidance of the sanitary sciences, come from the muddy street into houses, carrying with us some part of the wet and slush, and leaving it on the carpets. It is a dirty custom. Boots and shoes ought to be made in a more sensible manner, with slippers of soft kid inside, and with fastenings easy to undo, unlike laces. Meantime our choice of carpets should be guided by our knowledge that few persons wipe their boots thoroughly on the door-mat before they enter a house. It is therefore well to avoid colours which are easily soiled, as in plain felts, which show clearly the faintest stains. As a ground for rugs there is nothing more beautiful than a floor-cloth of felt in dark peacock green ; but when a few friends call on a wet Sunday for tea, a housewife is in fear and trembling, because felt *feels*, and keeps the impressions of damp footmarks.

As a rule, Eastern carpets bear this ill-usage better than those which are made in Europe by machinery, their colour-schemes having a deeper tone, free from the

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light greens and blues which to many English eyes are quite pleasant even in self-tinted weaved fabrics. Good Oriental carpets have a local colour not unlike that of a mountain overgrown with heather; and it is a happy juxtaposition of colours that produces the quiet richness in the general effect. Every tint lies perfectly flat on the ground and the patterns are admirably right.

All this applies to hand-made carpets, in which a strong canvas is formed as the weaver progresses with his work. Worsted, hair, or silk is tied into the canvas, and the weaver has a freedom in his choice of colour which is quite impossible in machine-made carpets, those necessary peace-offerings at the shrine of modern economy. The late William Morris made a thorough study of this subject, and the following passage from his article on carpets should be read several times with the greatest attention :

“The velvet pile and Brussels are simply coarse worsted velvets woven over wires like other velvet, and cut, in the case of the velvet pile; and Kidderminster carpets are stout cloths, in which abundance of warp (a warp to each weft) is used for the sake of wear and tear. The velvet carpets need the same kind of design as to colour and quality as the real carpets; only, as the colours are necessarily limited in number, and the pattern must repeat at certain distances, *the design should be simpler and smaller than in a real carpet.* A Kidderminster carpet calls for a

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small design in which the *different planes*, or *plies*, as they are called, *are well interlocked*."

Again :

"Mechanical weaving has to repeat the pattern on the cloth within comparatively narrow limits ; the number of colours also is limited in most cases to four or five. In most cloths so woven, therefore, the best plan seems to be to choose a pleasant ground colour and to superimpose a pattern mainly composed of either a lighter shade of that colour, or a colour in no very strong contrast to the ground ; and then, if you are using several colours, to light up this general arrangement either with a more forcible outline, or by spots of stronger colour carefully disposed. Often the lighter shade on the darker suffices, and hardly calls for anything else : some very beautiful cloths are merely damasks in which the warp and weft are of the same colour, but a different tone is obtained by the figure and the ground being woven with a longer or shorter twill : the *tabby* being tied by the warp very often, the *satin* much more rarely. In any case, the patterned webs produced by mechanical weaving, if the ornament is to be effective and worth the doing, require . . . crispness and clearness of detail : the *geometrical structure* of the pattern, which is a *necessity in all recurring patterns*, should be *boldly insisted upon*, so as to draw the eye from accidental figures, which the recurrence of the pattern is apt to produce."

Once more : "The meaningless stripes and spots and other tormentings of the simple twill of the web, which

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are so common in the woven ornament of the eighteenth century and in our times, should be carefully avoided : all these things are the last resource of a jaded invention and a contempt of the simple and fresh beauty that comes of a sympathetic *suggestion* of natural forms : if the pattern be vigorously and firmly drawn with a true feeling for the beauty of line and *silhouette*, the play of light and shade on the material of the simple twill will give all the necessary variety."

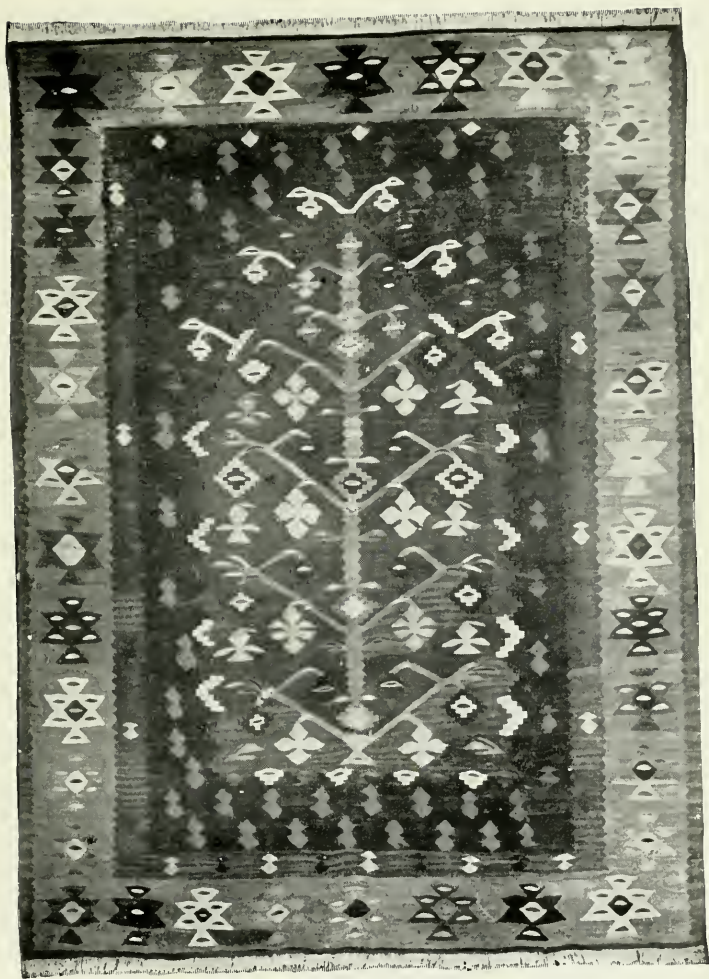
It is good to reinforce our own convictions with those of a great expert like William Morris, whose criticisms should enable any one to tell the essential difference between good carpets and bad ; "between the handiwork of the free craftsman doing as he *pleased* with his work, and the drudgery of the 'operative' set to his task by a tradesman competing for the custom of a frivolous public."

But even when a good carpet is chosen, there are difficult points to be considered, and among them is one which a great many persons neglect altogether. How is the carpet to be laid down ? The common and wrong method is to fit it carefully to the skirting around the room, and very often it is cut here and there to the shape of recessed nooks and spaces, like those formed by the chimney-breast and the windows. By this means a carpet is made unsuitable for any room save one ; and, besides that, two principles of household taste are broken. One is a principle of symmetry, and the other a principle of design. It is not right to hide entirely

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from view the purpose which any structural feature in a house has to serve. A floor, for instance, must bear weight, hence the material with which it is finished must be of a kind that will support heavy burdens. A concrete floor covered with paper would not *look* secure, because we should see only the paper; the concrete would have no existence to any one who did not know of its being under the paper. On the other hand, wood has such a general reputation as a weight-bearer that a boarded floor looks right, and we rarely inquire what is under the boards. Now a carpet, though a thing to be walked upon, is not by itself a platform, a bearer of weight; it needs under it a quite adequate support; and for this reason some portion of the wood flooring should be shown as a frame around a carpet.

And now comes in the principle of symmetry. All good things in art arise from practical considerations, and here is an excellent example. A carpet *looks* better when it is framed by a border of stained wood or of parquetry, while the floor asserts itself as a floor, and prevents the carpet from being monotonous. Also—and this point is to be remembered—the room seems to be larger. To produce an effect of greater size in a room is commonly looked upon as a question of colour; but this notion is not entirely right. Colour, no doubt, aids in the illusion, but a factor of greater importance is the breaking up of colour by straight lines that attract and please the eye. Thus, for example, a room with a good frieze and dado looks larger than one of the same



CARPET: ANTIQUE KELIM
Messrs. STORY & Co., Kensington, London

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size and shape in which the wall-paper reaches from the cornice to the skirting ; and in just the same way, when floors are carpeted all over, rooms appear to be dwarfed ; for the eye takes in all the surface area at a glance and finds it monotonous. A bordering of wood not only isolates the carpet in a symmetrical way, but forms another resting-place for the eye ; and its value in the general look of a room depends on the contrast between its colour and that of the carpet. A rich transparent brown is usually excellent, when good parquetry cannot be used.

Parquetry needs geometrical patterns, simple and clean-cut ; the variously-coloured woods should be chosen and fitted with the greatest care, because the patterning must be harmonious and perfectly flat. No suggestion of perspective is allowed ; that is, no piece of wood must look either lower or higher than the rest. For this reason strong contrasts of tint are apt to be dangerous ; it is safer and better to aim at a rich general effect with but slight variations of colour. And this applies also to inlaid furniture. There is nothing more objectionable than those aggressive inlays of light-tinted woods which start out from the surface of a wardrobe in mahogany. In some crafts second-rate work is tolerable ; but in parquetry and decorated furniture the result is either bad or good ; there is no middle excellence. Nor is the reason of this far to seek. Woods are beautiful with a simple polished surface, and nothing but the finest workmanship can improve their natural qualities and merits.

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We pass on now to another kind of floor-covering, namely :

Matting.

This material came into vogue in the reign of Henry VIII. It may then have differed from our own matting, but it is mentioned in records of that time, and to think about traditions in house furnishing is always pleasant and useful. Matting may be looked upon as a descendant of the rush-carpets which preceded it by many a generation, carpets of strewn rushes, you will remember. Straw-coloured matting is a good ground for rugs ; only it accumulates dust and soon shows wear and tear, lasting for six or seven years, not more. Still, the short life is a pleasant one, and the dust which matting collects, though troublesome like all dust, is not greater than that for which carpets are disliked by men of science ; indeed, it is less, I think, because a great deal of the dust sinks through the matting to the undercover of thick brown paper. A padding of brown paper is a good thing for a mat-carpet to lie upon ; it lessens the wear and tear, deadens sound from the room below, and gives a softer foothold.

Perhaps the one real drawback to matting is the injury which may be done to it when heavy furniture is moved ; and as it looks particularly well in studies and in bedrooms, where heavy furniture is the rule, a housewife does not forget to condemn matting on that score. Beds must be moved every morning, and unless

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they run on little "tramway lines," like those which are made by Messrs. Heal and Son, they do so much harm to a strong matting that even a modern servant feels quite unhappy, and begins (when encouraged in a persuasive manner) to lift the beds instead of dragging them. While the Servant Question remains acute, I fear that matting is for those persons only who are not worried by the loss of perishable things.

Tiles.

It was Henry III., the first real patron of our English home, who tried to revive the tiled and tessellated floors used in England by the Romans. For this purpose, as may be learnt from contemporary records, he encouraged foreign craftsmen to settle down near his Court, but Englishmen were not greatly interested. Henry III. was in advance of his time. His aim was to bring into homes the refined arts so freely lavished on church decoration, while his people clung to ancient and outworn customs, as barnacles do on wrecked ships. But tile-making met with some encouragement, and at last made its way into the main stronghold of English conservatism, the Common Hall ; this happened in the fifteenth century. Halls of that period were usually paved with tiles variously coloured, and so laid down as to form ingenious patterns. One combination of colours during the eighth Henry's reign was green and yellow, and therefore akin to the gold and green that Henry III. greatly admired in a panelled decoration for

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walls. Of course, the effect would depend on the tints chosen for the green and yellow, but many entrance-halls to-day would be improved if they were tiled with a rich peacock green and a deep amber-yellow. In connection with yellow and its value in the home arts, one thing should be kept in mind: it is very difficult to harmonise unless it has either a straw tint or a mixture of gamboge; and as in writing no real description can be given of colours and their tints and harmonies, I must try to think of some well-known material from which you may learn what a gamboge tint is like. Old satin-wood has the colour which we need in unsparkling yellows; that is, in yellows unlike gold. If, then, you have eye-knowledge of the yellow hues of gold, of amber, and of satinwood, you cannot go wrong in this matter. Study also the yellow tints in flowers.

It is always a good thing to choose tiles in plain tints and to use them in simple geometrical patterns; all conceits should be avoided, and all pronounced effects of colour. The main harmonies are connected with tints of yellow, either in juxtaposition with a greenish-blue, or in mild contrast with dull reds; but these effects may be varied by the introduction of black into the borders, or of black and cream-white. But, to judge from some hearth-tiles which I saw recently, simplicity of effect is not to be aimed at now in "ideal" homes. Entrance-halls may yet be covered with tiles to represent a landscape, or a birthday party, or a

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village girl and her broken heart. These things may happen; but if you want tiles of a patterned kind, either for flooring or for wall-decoration, do not forget to acquaint yourself with the best work which may be seen at South Kensington and in other English museums. After studying the old Persian tiles and their descendants, the Hispano-Moresque wares, you will have in mind a standard by which to judge all modern work, and this will enable you to tread with safety in the midst of pitfalls.

Many things have been done of late in the manufacture of tiles, some fearfully done; the reign of quantity over quality, the casting in moulds by the gross and printing by the thousands, may be scientific as well as commercial, but the Fictile Arts decline. No fine work can be the servant and the slave of mechanical methods. There is also, in modern fictiles, a fatal tendency to over-elaborate details of decoration, and to rely less and less on the beauty of good plain colours shining under a glazed surface. Absurd little flowers are stuck in the middle of tiles as though people in this twentieth century were uneducated children ready to be delighted with the poorest ornaments and toys. The wisest course to pursue at the present time is to choose those tiles which are perfectly simple and unpretending. Look for pleasant colour: more you do not need. Ruskin, after describing an English home very modestly furnished, once said: "More than this, few should seek"—one of the best criticisms ever offered to a public which

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has tried to imitate oak by graining and to make marble halls with marbled wall-paper.

Another useful criticism may be taken from Carlyle, who found a lesson in good workmanship where few had eyes to see it. "The coarsest hobnailed pair of shoes, if honestly made according to the laws of fact and leather, are not ugly ; they are honest, and fit for their object ; the highest eye may look on them without displeasure, nay with a kind of satisfaction. This rude packing-case, it is faithfully made ; square to the rule, and formed with rough and ready strength against injury, fit for its use ; not a pretentious *hypocrisy* but a modest, serviceable *fact*. Whoever pleases to look upon it will find the image of a humble manfulness in it, and will pass on with some infinitesimal impulse to thank the gods."

"Not a pretentious *hypocrisy* but a modest, serviceable *fact*": that is what a good tile should be ; what all things in a well-ordered home should be. Every walk of decorative art leads to this conclusion ; hence I have to repeat it in every chapter after studying a different set of shop-window utilities. If only we could free all manufacturers from pretension, and force them to keep to modest, serviceable facts, things fit for their use, machines would be a benefit to all the popular artistic crafts, because of the rapidity with which they would multiply unaffected work.*

* For inquiries concerning tiles, write to Messrs. Morris and Co., 449 Oxford Street, and to Messrs. Doulton, Lambeth, London, who

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The bad tiles so common to-day are not bad because their craftsmanship is scamped, but because there is far too much of it in wrong places ; and this applies also to the designs and colours on another kind of floor-covering, namely

Linoleum.

There is no reason at all why this material should be “a pretentious hypocrisy,” instead of “a modest, serviceable fact.” Those who make it have only to commission a few appropriate designs and schemes of colour, going to artists of acknowledged reputation, like Mr. Selwyn Image and Mr. Heywood Sumner. These experts would see at once what linoleum is unfitted for, and also what it *must* do if persons with educated tastes are to be pleased. It is clear, for instance, that linoleum is not a weaved carpet, nor a textile fabric of any kind ; yet a large quantity of linoleum is printed with coloured designs in blatant imitation of carpets and rugs. Years ago the patterns copied marble pavements and parquetry floors, conceits laughably false in principle, but not more so than carpet. like linoleum. I have by my side a fragment in which all the simplest laws of decorative art are infringed. The pattern is taken from a textile curtain made long ago in Italy : to put such a pattern on a floor-cloth is

are giving serious attention both to tile pavements and to glazed and enamelled tiles for walls. Tile pavements are not easy to choose. Be on your guard (1) against many colours, (2) against strong contrasts of two or three tints, and (3) against intricacy of design.

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one mistake ; but there is another, for the linoleum is printed to look like a tessellated pavement ! These absurdities are hard to account for. Quite useful materials are invented and manufactured ; then comes the curse of pretension, bringing with it ridiculous shams.

Yet linoleum *ought* to be very useful : it is inexpensive, it is durable, and it holds colour firmly. When the colour is plain and quiet, and the border simple, linoleum is pleasant in the corridors of flats, with a margin of stained wood on each side of it. When patterns are used the guiding principle is this : linoleum, like every other material to which designs can be applied, must be what it really is, and not affect the qualities of a richer thing. More than thirty years ago Mr. C. L. Eastlake criticised the floor-cloth then in use, but his remarks, unfortunately, were not followed. They are still worth reading and worth remembering. “Endless varieties of geometrical diaper could be used for floor-cloth, without resorting to the foolish expedient of copying the knots and veins of wood and marble,” or the patterns on carpets or the workmanship of tessellated pavements. “Some very fair examples of this geometrical pattern may be met with occasionally, but, as a rule, too many colours are introduced in them. However attractive it may appear in the shop, this kind of polychromy ought to be avoided on the floor of a private house. Two tints—or, better still, two shades of the same tint (which should not be a *positive* colour)

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—will be found most suitable for the purpose, and in any case there should be no attempt to indicate relief or raised ornament in the pattern.”

This criticism is sound and good. Do not choose any floor-cloth in which there is a marked difference of tone between the pattern and the ground; and be on your guard against bright reds and greens. Low keys of colour are essential in linoleum, if only because modest effects cannot be unpleasant. Besides that, inexpensive materials look “cheap” when they assert themselves: it is quietness of colour and design that gives them a higher rank.

One merit of linoleum I forgot to mention—namely, its cleanliness: it is easy to wash and keep free from dust, a very important thing in these days of sanitary science. Dust is something more and worse than a nuisance, it is a positive danger to health, being full of bacteria. Men of science, in their campaign against dust, wish to banish from our homes all draperies, all carpets, and all unnecessary nooks and corners. There must be few ledges and mouldings for dust to rest upon, and in future times, rooms will be oval and round, as many were in the eighteenth century. The men of science are right unquestionably, but we cannot follow their advice under present-day conditions. How many small houses are sufficiently well built to warrant a disuse of carpets? Soft coverings for ill-made floors are obligatory, as any person will admit who has lived in a flat.

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Modern floors have a drum-like sound if you walk upon them before they are carpeted; and sometimes we may hear through them the sound of conversation in rooms downstairs. It is thus a duty to cover floors with some material soft to walk upon, and pleasant to see; good carpets are the best for these purposes, and the old method of sweeping them is no longer at all necessary. To brush up dust into the air is an act of inconvenience which we may leave now to the most recent public benefactor, the motor-car. Several good carpet-sweepers are sold to-day, and special reference may be made here to the pneumatic sweeper, a thing so light and simple that a child of ten can use it. The weight is only $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and the cost 39s. 6d. Oiling is not required, an important matter, and no dust is raised. This wonderful little instrument is made at 87 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W. A larger sweeper of the same kind would dust walls, saving a great deal of labour in those memorable days known as spring cleaning, perhaps because the household nerves are active and "jumpy."

The "Little Giant" Dust Extractor (Sir Hiram Maxim's patent) is recommended by many householders. This cleaner is made on the vacuum principle; many kinds of "collectors" can be attached to its flexible tube, and with them dust can be removed from cornices and from under furniture.

A few hints may be given now on shops where good floor-coverings are to be found:

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Messrs. Treloar and Sons, Ludgate Hill, London. Eastern carpets, Brussels carpets, British Lahore rugs and mats, English Turkish carpets, Cheviot carpets, Coco-nut fibre matting, Cork carpets, Donegal carpets, felts, linoleum, &c. &c. This firm has won eleven Prize Medals. The catalogue is practical and thorough—free from that self-praise so objectionable in modern advertising.

Messrs. Maple and Co., Tottenham Court Road, London, W.C., were among the earliest importers of Eastern rugs and carpets ; they retain to this day an excellent standard of good taste in those textile fabrics. Their English carpets are chosen with care, and their “Caledon Art Squares” are useful in ladies’ boudoirs and bedrooms. Some formal border patterns might be tried.

Messrs. Morris and Co., 449 Oxford Street, London, well known for their wall-papers and excellent textile fabrics. Their experience is of value to all householders.

Messrs. Heal and Son, Tottenham Court Road, London, specialists on bedroom furniture ; careful, thorough, and ready always to follow useful suggestions.

Messrs. Hampton and Co., Pall Mall, London, all varieties of carpets.

Messrs. Story and Co., Kensington High St., London, W. Their efforts in the favour of good workmanship are known and encouraged.

Messrs. Cardinal and Harford, 108-110 High Holborn, London, import a large variety of good Eastern work.

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But readers can choose their own shops, keeping well in mind the qualities which a good carpet ought to have. In this chapter all essential points are stated and explained, but I should like to repeat with emphasis one thing that concerns our English and Irish carpets, namely, let us beware of light blues and of grassy greens. We can find in British work the heathen tints so common in fine Eastern carpets, and these have a varied charm in rich schemes of quiet decoration.

Finally, do not allow yourself to be "talked over" by any salesman. His duty is to sell what his employer has either purchased or manufactured, and to do that he has often to contradict many principles of decorative art.

CHAPTER V

THE CEILING

A SCHOOLBOY, in a recent examination, was startled by the question, What is a ceiling? He had seen a few in his short life, but had noticed nothing more than a flat space of cold white plaster, cracked here and there in ragged streaks, and having as a central ornament a very ugly flower with crinkled leaves. The lad was puzzled. He had no idea what the flower meant nor why it should grow in the middle of a ceiling. It had not been mentioned in any conversations to which he had listened.

Other parts of a room caused a great deal of trouble every week, but only three things about the ceiling had ever been pointed out to him. The first was the colour of the central flower, which years of impure gas had stained. The other things brought the lad inside that little realm of discipline where the birch rod holds sway. "If you spill water on your bedroom floor," said his father, "it will come through the ceiling into my study, and you'll be whipped. Don't do your dumb-bell exercises there; you shake the ceiling, disturb my work, and annoy me seriously. When you talk I can hear you through the ceiling. Be careful."

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This was not much good for an examination paper, the boy thought, but as he knew nothing more, and desired to win a prize-book full of sea yarns, he wrote as follows :

“ The ceiling is the other side of a floor. If you take a bath on the floor and make a lot of splashing, the ceiling becomes wet, and bits of plaster may fall down. If you want to talk to a friend about some real fun for Guy Fawkes day, don't stand on the floor, because your voices go through the ceiling and give the show away. A ceiling is never cleaned unless water gets on it, and then there's no end to pay. Walls and carpets make a lot of fuss near Easter, but ceilings are left alone. They have big flowers and leaves in the centre, very ugly, and so they must mean something or they wouldn't be kept there. But nobody says what they mean, so they are lucky things, I suppose, for they never seem to bring bad luck if you don't splash too much when bathing.”

The boy won his first prize. An architect would have given him a gold medal. No criticisms could be better. In most houses and flats—at least, in houses and flats for small incomes—the ceiling is a fraud, bald, impudent, and troublesome. Its one ornament, so-called, is an offence which tenants should pull down at their own cost. There the ceiling is above our heads, the largest unbroken area in a room, yet the only interest which it attracts, as a rule, is connected with the jerry-builder and his abominable speculations.

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We do not see how it is united to the floor above. All the joists are hidden, no part of the structural work can be tested by hand-touch and eyesight. The joists may be too weak to support the furniture in the room above, or the ceiling plaster may be "keyed" insecurely to the thin laths of wood nailed on the underside of the joists. These matters have to be taken on credit, though we know very well that bad plaster may fall down in pieces large enough to kill a child, and that joists in ill-constructed houses have been subject to dry rot. Ceilings of this kind are as unstructural as shop-windows, which appear to carry all the weight of masonry forming the upper storeys. 'That is a great deal for sheets of plate glass to do !

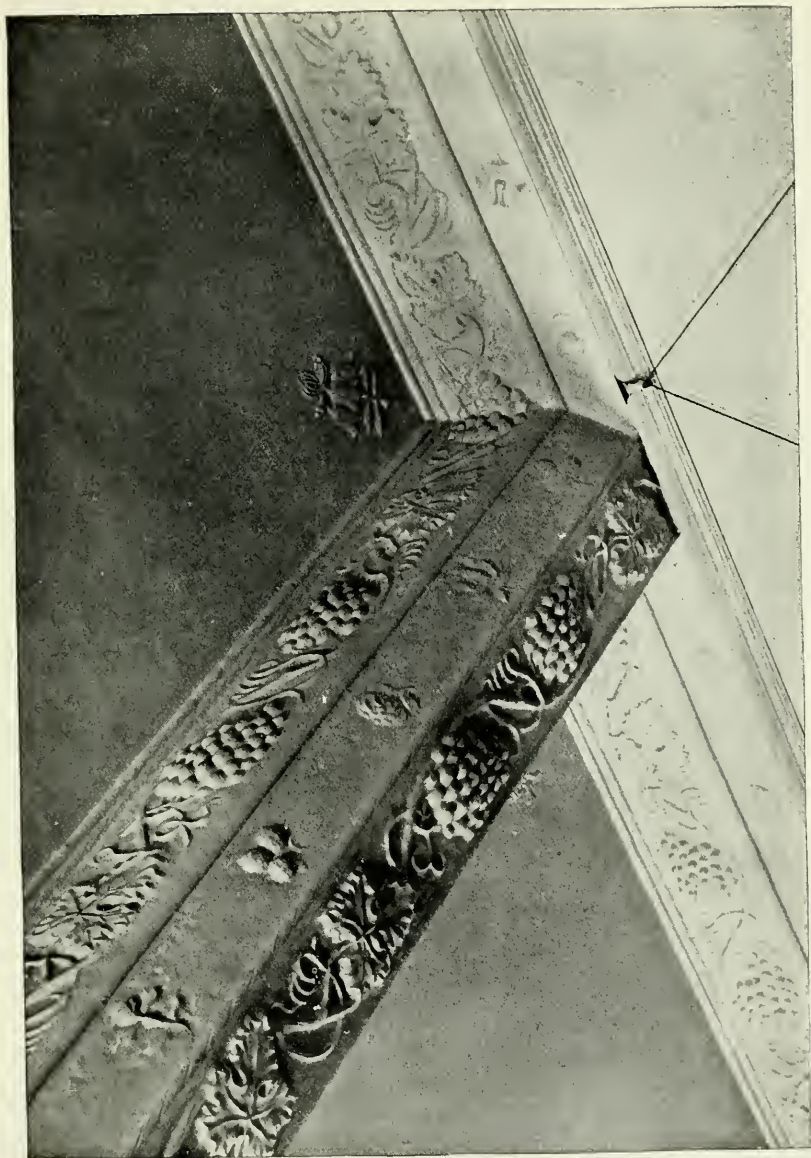
It is a relief to the mind when the strength of a weight-bearer is visible to the eye ; not when it is merely seen, but when it *looks* fit for its purpose. Everybody feels this under certain conditions. Is that scaffolding strong enough ? Will that bridge bear the weight of a railway train ? Is that column too thin and light ? Such questions occur to all of us. And yet, somehow, in our attitude to the hidden supports of ceilings, and floors, and shop windows, we are quite uncritical, and allow reason to fall asleep. It is a question of custom, and custom makes fools of us all. To sit quietly in a room with a ton of furniture on the floor upstairs, and not to know how the floor is constructed, is to put too much faith in speculative building methods ; and why should our street architecture be ruined by

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huge glass windows that appeal to the eye as the only visible supports under several storeys of brick or of stone? Bad customs of this kind should be ridiculed by the public and laughed at in the newspapers. Traders are not compelled to open shops, and there should be a law to prevent them from making their customs a settled public hindrance to good street architecture.

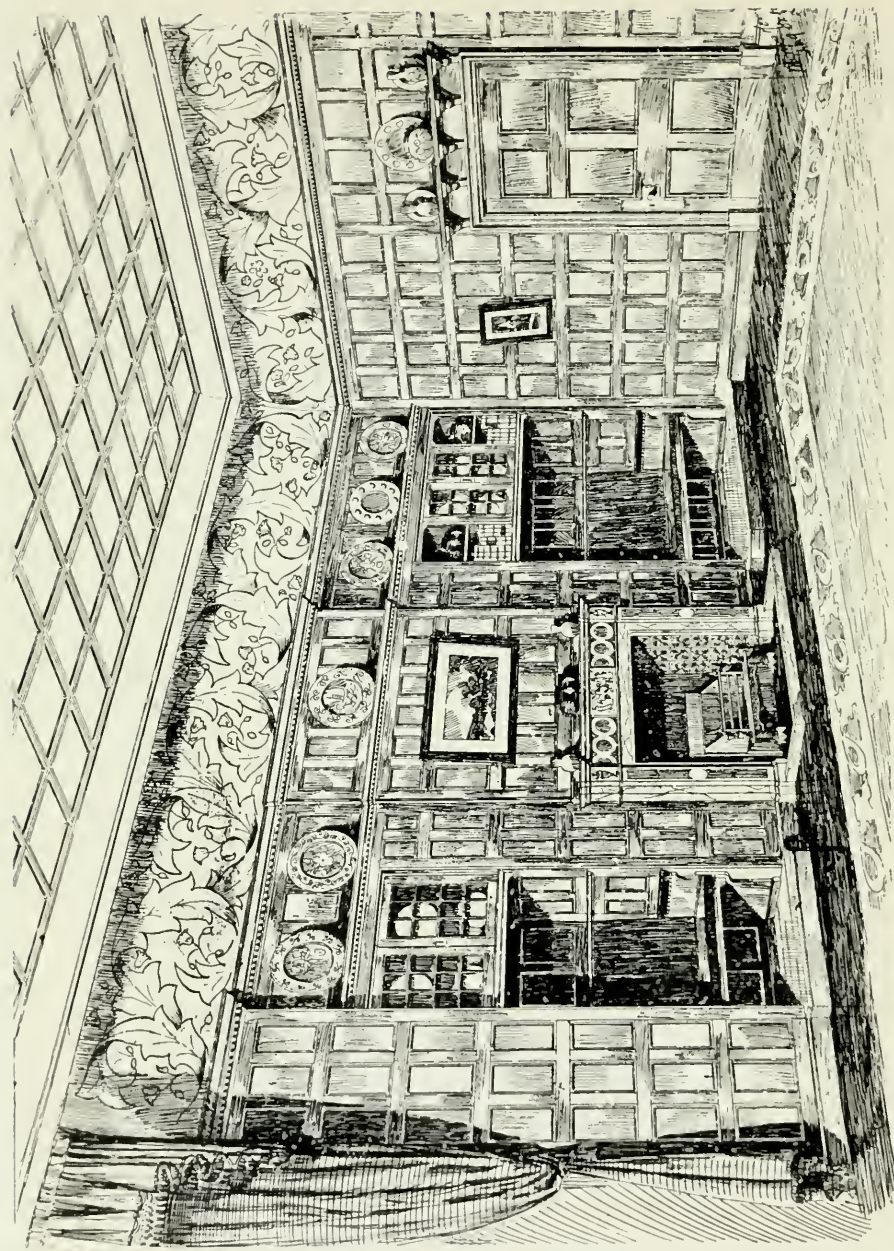
It is only by teaching the public to look at familiar things from a standpoint of common sense that bad workmanship can be discredited. Even Ruskin, when swayed by some familiar customs, was at times amusingly inartistic, relating with pride how he put down on his library floor a carpet covered with roses, over which he walked with the greatest pleasure in the world, because he considered that flowers in a carpet pattern were better than the beautiful designs on an Eastern textile fabric. In this matter he remained a boy with Early Victorian ideals.

But although he was happy when he had roses under his feet, few men had a keener dislike for other popular follies in the household arts. His "Lectures on Architecture" still form one of his most helpful books, because the main lesson taught by them is the need of structural craft at once visible and satisfying. We ought to feel quite certain that things are what they appear to be. If a ceiling fell it would kill everybody in the room; hence, no doubt, its capacity to bear the weight of the floor above it should be made as apparent



PLASTER CEILING BY G. P. BANKART

From his Book on "The Art of Plaster" (published by E. T. BATSFORD, London)



OAK-PANELLED BILLIARD ROOM. THE FIREPLACE FLANKED BY TWO RECESSES. MORRIS PAPER FRIEZE.
HAMMERSMITH CARPET. DESIGNED FOR A HOUSE AT CHISLEHURST

WILLIAM MORRIS & Co., Oxford St., London

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to the eye as is possible. Under modern building methods not much *is* possible, but a few facts stand out clearly :

1. When a ceiling is entirely bald, barren, and naked, stretching from cornice to cornice like a white sheet, it looks unsafe. Even a central flower, though ugly and absurd, makes a halting-place for the eye to rest upon and lessens that menacing monotony which belongs to a large area of flat plaster fastened to invisible supports above our heads.

2. Accordingly, a ceiling looks more secure when it is ribbed or when it is decorated. This, of course, is an optical illusion, but the effect on the mind is not the less important. Elizabethan and Jacobean ceilings, with their rich and heavy plaster mouldings, look safer than plain modern work, not because we remember that they are admirably built, but because the ornament has a structural character that gives pleasure. It divides a flat surface into compartments, so we look at the ceiling bit by bit, and note how the raised mouldings are formed into designs that repeat well in an ordered sequence. We are so keenly interested that the ceiling is forgotten, lost in its ornamentation. From a standpoint of structural architecture, this not only may be wrong but is wrong ; a ceiling ought to show in what manner the floor above it is built ; but when English architects in their search after beauty and comfort began to hide from sight the great wooden beams stretching from wall to wall, they did everything in their power to

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give a look of security to their ceiling decoration. Their aim was to charm the eye; and it seemed to them that white plaster, however carefully it was modelled, would loom too heavily overhead and be distressing. So they made their ceilings resplendent with colour and with gold, a practice that never failed to win praise from foreign critics. Spenser tells us that

Gold was the parges, and the cieling bright
Did shine all scaly with great plates of gold.

The stucco art of ceiling decoration—that is, the art of ceiling a room entirely with ornamented plaster—came to England in the reign of Henry VIII., brought here by the Italian stucco-workers who embellished the Palace of Nonesuch, now vanished. In earlier times the wooden beams in the floor above formed part of a ceiling, sometimes patterned with green and gold, as in the third Henry's reign, and sometimes covered with wood panels, as in the fifteenth century, when ceilings of wood were divided into square compartments by ribs of bold projection, often well moulded. At the intersection of the ribs were square bosses, carved with foliage, or with shields of arms, or other ornaments. In the time of the eighth Henry the ceilings were more commonly of plaster enriched with a great variety of patterns; sometimes pendants took the place of bosses, in other cases panelling. Pendants were much in vogue during Elizabeth's reign as well as in Jacobean plaster-work; and it is worth noting that ceilings of

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pendentive character form a type peculiar to England, for they are but rarely found in any other country. They seem to have been suggested by the stone fan-groining which gave so much character to late Gothic vaulting, in the reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII.

But that is not the real point. The real point is that ceilings may be divided into four classes :

1. Those in which the wooden floor beams project through a surface of plaster, as in many old cottages and country houses. For a cottage or small house it is a good, sensible treatment to put in joists of more than usual thickness and to use plaster between them, showing the joists as beams either carved or stained.

2. Those in which the wooden floor beams are strongly panelled with good planks, then divided into squares by moulded ribs, with carved bosses at the intersections. These ceilings came into vogue rather late in the fifteenth century : they were enriched with gold and with paint, and, being convenient and handsome, they continued in use for a long time, till late in the sixteenth century.

3. But a rival appeared during the eighth Henry's reign, when rich plaster ceilings, unrelieved by wooden ribs or beams, were introduced from Italy. From that time onward to the discovery of coal gas, about 1814, a great deal of care was given to this art in plaster ; ceilings, indeed, met with an artistic consideration equal to that which was given to floors and walls. Redundant ornament was common at the beginning of this long period, and feeble decoration marked its end, as in

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the work done by Italian craftsmen for the brothers Adam.

4. With the introduction of coal gas and ill-trimmed lamps, a period of denuded ceilings began, for householders would not spend their money on elaborate work that was soon impaired by the dirt generated by smoking lamps and bad gas. Another cause also helped to bring about this decline of ceiling decoration—namely, an unsettled state of tenancy. This drawback to the comfort of homes has come down to us intensified by fifty years of jerry-building, and also by the little miseries inseparable from a life in flats. It is impossible to rear children in a flat, and most women are bored to death by having all the household work concentrated on one floor with no means of escaping from it. A staircase has a real moral effect on those who pass the greater part of the day indoors. It soothes the nerves, it gives exercise and change of scene and air ; it isolates rooms when they are being cleaned, so that a house is not entirely disturbed by the daily sweeping and dusting. In flats, on the other hand, the passages every morning are filled with furniture from one room or other.

Add the inconveniences of flats to the jerry-made troubles in suburban villas, and it is easy to understand why a lease of three years has become a risky experiment. We hesitate to bind ourselves to discomforts that appear inevitable ; and we decline to spend much money on a landlord's ceilings.

Yet something must be done, and people ask, " What

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shall we do with our ceilings? *How* shall we decorate them?" I have given the main principles, but how are these to be carried out under a three years' lease? It is easy to pull down the hideous centre-flowers, but in what way can the naked surface be enriched at a small cost? That is not an easy nut to crack. Our business in life is not to improve ceilings for landlords. Whatever improvements we do make, never without some reluctance, must be for our own good under the leases which we have signed. A friend of mine, under a long repairing lease, spent more than £2000 to put his house in thorough order and comfort, thereby adding to his rent a given number of pounds per annum distributed over his tenancy. That sum did not include the furniture. The landlord was fortunate indeed, but the money was spent after a business calculation and for definite practical ends. In the same way the problem of ceiling decoration should be looked upon by all of us.

How much can you afford to spend on that work under the terms of your lease? A short term of three years justifies nothing more than a change in the colour of the plaster or than a paper in harmony with your walls. Good ceiling papers are designed to-day, and look well when they are chosen with judgment; only, it is useful and even necessary to seek advice from a competent architect, because the ceiling has a decorative function to perform which demands the most careful consideration from experts. Many things call for a knowledge which only experience can give. The first is

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the structural condition in which you find the ceiling, and the next, its relative proportion to the walls. After this another point arises. How will the ceiling receive light by day, and what is the quantity of the light? Does it come from several windows at the side, or from one window facing the street, or from a window at each end? A long, low room lit from one end naturally demands a different ceiling treatment from a wide, high room lighted from the side; and again, the mode of artificial lighting by night is a matter to be thought over, and you have also to consider the room itself, its special use, the style of its decoration, and the determining factor of all—cost, expense.

With so many technical matters to govern even the simplest ornament for ceilings, it is essential, I believe, to have expert guidance, as from Mr. G. P. Bankart, because amateurs invariably choose a wrong thing when they have too many worries in their minds at the same time. “Let us take this,” they say in desperation, “and have done with it.” Now an expert—a good architect, for instance—is not worried at all, knowing from experience what is necessary under given conditions of light and space. Low ceilings are difficult to treat, because patterns may be seen too distinctly, and then the ceiling looks lower. Hence it is perhaps better to accept low ceilings as you find them—if the plaster is a mellow cream-white in colour. Cold-looking plaster, which in the twilight turns to a bluish-grey, is unpleasantly discordant. There are two mysteries in the routine work

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of house-painters, bad colour after long practice, and a belief that long practice justifies bad colour. To find among them a man who knows the difference between good and false tints of white is a rare experience. Many householders, too, are slow to understand that certain colours may be varied indefinitely. "A beautiful white?" they ask. "Surely white is always white?" A printer once said to me: "A fine black, did you say? I've seen only one black in my time, and I've been a printer these twenty years." Similarly, many house-painters fail to match the tints chosen for ceilings and woodwork, nor do they ever fail to assert that their defective colour-sense has been much admired.

The only way in which tints of white can be studied with success and pleasure is to watch Nature at work in her flowers, in her shells, in her clouds, and in chalk and marble. Milk and cream are other examples, so are eggs; and note, too, the lighter colours in the best cigar ash, the lightest of all being very beautiful in conjunction with gold. I have seen it used for ceilings and for drawing-room doors and woodwork. In the former case the plaster ornament was partly gilded; while in the latter, gold was applied to the raised mouldings of the wooden panels. Perhaps the finest white of all for a plain ceiling is cream-white or the white of lilies.

Another matter now suggests itself. Is the cornice a part of the ceiling or a part of the walls? The French answer this question in a way different from our own. In England the usual treatment is to make

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the cornice the same colour as the ceiling, while in France the skirting and the cornice are usually painted the same tint ; then the cornice becomes the summit of the walls, a sort of capital upon which the ceiling rests. This appears to be more logical and structural than our English method ; certainly it is worth consideration when we have above our heads a large area of flat plaster unsupported by visible means. Let the cornice be to a wall what a capital is to a column, and let the ceiling lie upon it in a conspicuous manner : a thing not difficult to do if we keep them apart by a good contrast of colour.

It is unnecessary to speak here of those richer arts in ceiling decoration which *house-owners* may practice, having a freedom which *householders* cannot enjoy under present conditions. A house-owner builds himself a home in accordance with his own needs and taste, and only one matter now interferes with his use of decorated ceilings. He cannot shut his eyes to the perils that dust brings into a home. When sanitation was neglected as a matter of course, despite the lessons taught by plagues, fevers, and small-pox, ceilings of heavily moulded plaster—and often of ponderous cast plaster—were put up without the least hesitation ; but no man of common sense would now build such extravagant lodgings for dust and germs. To-day, beyond a doubt, the mouldings should be simple and firm, their projection slight, and all sharp angles ought to be rounded off in order that the necessary work of cleaning

THE CEILING

may be easy. Pneumatic cleaners would be excellent for ceilings, which ought to be well dusted at least twice a month. Even once a year is not yet a general household custom, probably because a housewife cannot drag her finger across a ceiling. She would be astonished if she could and did.

Perhaps a panelled ceiling is the most hygienic : it is certainly not hard to clean, it looks warm and structural, its heaviness may be relieved by colour, and the cost is not great in a new house. But wood is a fine conductor of sound, and this adds to the difficulty of building a comfortable room. The success of a panelled ceiling depends on the choice of a good architect familiar with timbered work, like Mr. John Cash, London, Mr. Walter Cave, London, and Mr. E. A. Ould.

I have spoken before (p. 144) about the transmission of sound between the different parts of a building—a subject well worth the attention of scientists. Why should not a Royal Commission help us in this matter ? Everybody feels the need of sound-resisting walls, floors, and ceilings. And a Royal Commission, after hearing evidence from architects and forming definite opinions, could offer suggestions to the Board of Trade, the aim being to strengthen the Building Acts for the benefit of householders.

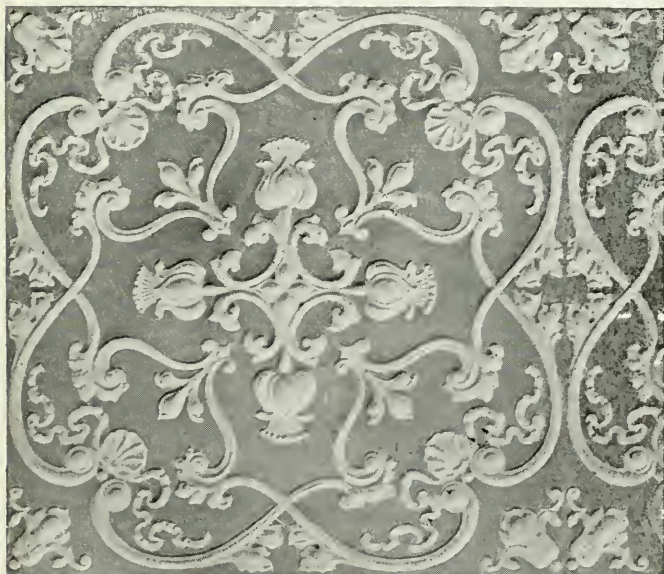
Only a few words need be said here about painted ceilings ; they are not for ordinary households, and it would take a good-sized book, with coloured illustrations, to describe them. A painted ceiling requires a

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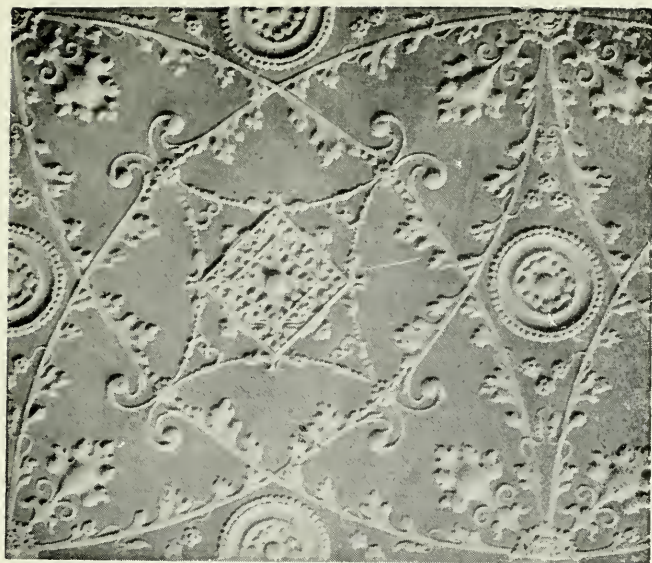
painted wall; both are permanent decorations that tone together, and not many successes have been achieved in our time.

Well done, under the right direction, painted ceilings will last for generations, "and if proper materials are used, can be cleaned without injury, so that in the long run it is not such an expensive process as it seems. And it is not repeated everywhere; it is an individual work, and not a ready-made, mechanical affair, purchasable at per yard by any one else. Yet there are ready-made, mechanically-produced expedients which are useful where circumstances prevent the use of the higher forms of decoration, where ephemeral decoration only is needed, and for the less important rooms in a house. Some of Mr. Scott Morton's embossed canvas patterns are very suitable for this purpose, and by the judicious use of a few moulded wood-ribs effective ceilings can be produced with them. Embossed papers, anaglypta, lignamur, and many other low-relief products are obtainable.* Japanese paper, which combines both colour and relief, can be very advantageously used with bamboo or other mouldings, and the gold ground is very effective in a somewhat dark room, and flock paper painted in one tone and rolled with another, so as to pick out the ornamental pattern in a lighter or a darker tint, produces a good effect. But in all these cases you

* The fault of these machine-made products is that they are often too ornate. Even when they are not, they may look so in small illustrations.

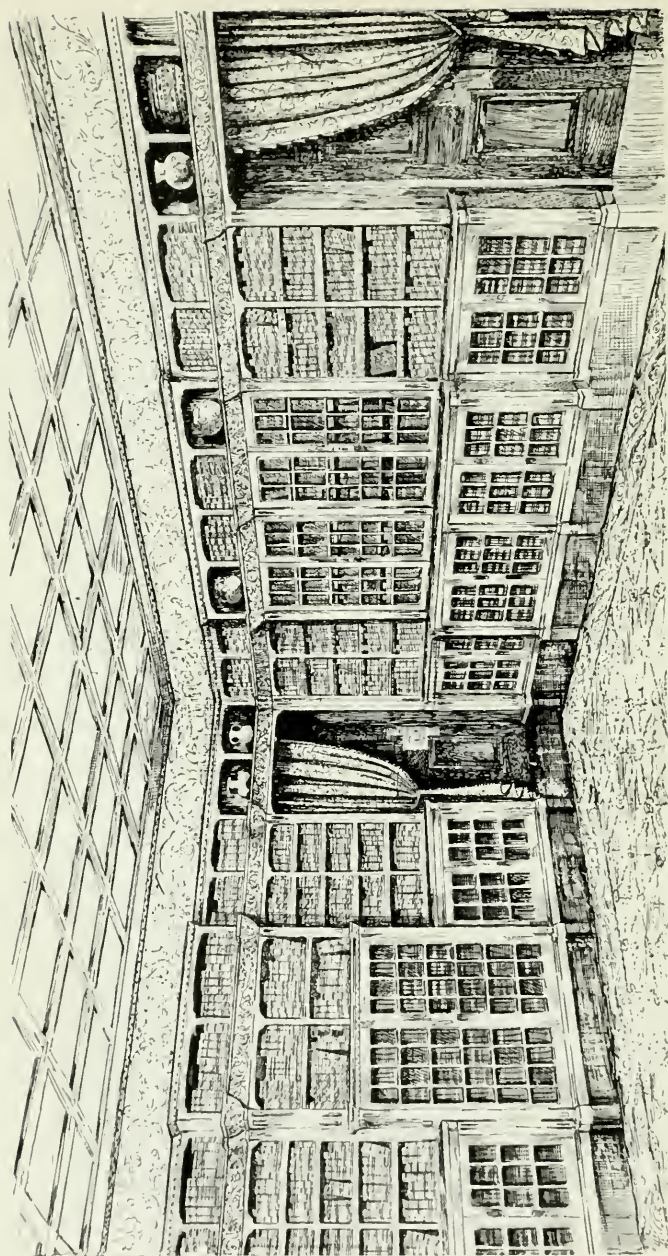


THE "BOSS" CEILING



THE "FLORENTINE" CEILING

JEFFREY & Co., Mortimer Street, Regent Street, W.



LIBRARY DESIGNED AND CARRIED OUT FOR THE HON. W. F. D. SMITH, M.P., AT GREENLANDS, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, CARVED OAK WOODWORK, OAK-RIBBED CEILING, WITH MODELLED PLASTER FRIEZE

WILLIAM MORRIS & Co., Oxford St. London

THE CEILING

should do something to relieve the monotony of a large expanse of the same reticulated ornament, either by breaking up the surface by broad divisions into panels or constructing a broad border of another pattern. The designs of these papers are often very admirable, and have engaged the attention of our most skilful designers, such as Mr. Walter Crane, Mr. Lewis Day, and many others.”*

The same authority gives other useful advice :

“The invention of ‘canvas plaster’—that is, thin canvas pressed into plaster whilst fluid—enables large surfaces of plaster to be cast very thinly and lightly. Moreover, the relief work is cast at the same time and in the same piece with the groundwork, so that the relief may be as low and the detail as small as desired. This enables the designer to model his work in clay in precisely the same manner as the old stucco-worker did his ceiling, save that it is not done *in situ*, as the artist must exercise his reason instead of his eye. Unfortunately, the modeller’s reason is rarely so cultivated as is his eye. From this model a mould is taken in gelatine, which being pliant enables the undercut portions of the mould, and consequently the cast, to relieve itself, and an effect of lightness to be attained with ease, which under the old process of rigid moulding could be but imperfectly obtained with much trouble and difficulty.”

Canvas plaster in its general effect has much in

* The late G. T. Robinson, F.S.A., in *The Magazine of Art*, August 1892, p. 357.

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common with those ceiling decorations which Italian workmen made in England for the brothers Adam, using a secret composition, a putty-like mixture, pressed into box-wood moulds. Mr. Stephen Webb has designed some charmingly simple work for canvas plaster, and modelled it also for Messrs. George Jackson and Sons, whose ancestors worked under the brothers Adam and divined the secret of that famous composition to which I have just referred.

Mr. Bankart has recently published an excellent book on the art of plaster (B. T. Batsford, publisher), which ought to be studied by every one who intends to build a house.

CHAPTER VI

WINDOWS, BLINDS, AND CURTAINS

ONE old English name for window was eye-hole, and there is still a resemblance between eyes and windows, for they receive light and betray character. As the best things in conversation are spoken by the eyes, not by the tongue, so a great many useful matters in the home arts are made known by windows, matters which sometimes represent the spirit of a long historic period. Contrast the tiny windows in feudal castles with the vast ones built by Elizabethan gentlemen, and you will realise to the full the difference between the great dawn of modern history and the earlier types of society, when sunlight was kept from rooms lest stones and arrows should enter by the same openings. Men were terribly afraid of death during feudal times, as may be learnt also from the ponderous armour worn by knights. Dangers were sought then because they were feared, just as children are tempted to climb trees by their ashamed dread of falling. The birth of courage is a revolt against fear, and its life is a tradition handed on from generation to generation. The epochs of tiny windows saw the birth of national courage and the making of the first traditions in national heroisms ; while large windows

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were contemporary with enlarged hopes and with new forms of daring enterprise, discovered by the great sea-adventurers, Cabot, Columbus, Vasco da Gama, and many others. The sixteenth century, like Goethe's last words, cried out for "More Light." Houses were sometimes built with more glass than wall. The sun was courted indoor like a king at his coronation.

Note, too, that all our own windows are historic in a far-off way. Some are leaf-shaped; they point heavenward and recall to mind the aspiring religious hopes expressed by architects during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Then there are square-headed windows with bold mullions and transoms, and framed at the top with good straight dripstones which turn down a little at the sides. These come to us from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but many were built at a later time; and even our Minister of Home Life, the Jerry-Builder, has tried his hand at Tudor and Elizabethan windows, complimenting the past in his own slipshod and dishonest way. Mullions and transoms are mediæval traditions, like oriels and bay-windows: they belong to the Gothic arts. Many other windows are Classic; that is, they form part of those Italian ideals of style which came to England at the Renaissance, and renewed the old power of the Roman genius. There are different shapes in Classic windows, some being tall and narrow, others wider and shorter; but all on the same level are of the same size and equidistant from each other. Classic windows are usually

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deep-set in the masonry, and many are crowned with a triangular headstone known as a pediment.

Perhaps the most familiar Classic window in English homes is the slender type, tall and narrow, as in Bedford Square, London. It has a distinction of its own in well-built houses, particularly when the sashes and frames are painted white. Windows with pleasant white frames are a characteristic of the Queen Anne architecture, so called, and here the white woodwork lies flush with the brick walls. There is something wholesome and friendly in white window-frames, as there is in clean cuffs and collars. Some experts put window-frames in deep brown or in dark green, while persons of no taste like pale greens, or give their hearts to ochre tints often grained to resemble oak. That part of the human mind where taste lives an uneasy life of fashion, or a dull existence of stereotyped convention, is hard to influence seriously; but if I may venture a dogmatism in a diffident manner, let me say that although a hard landlord may object to the outside use of white for windows, he cannot stop you from using that colour indoors.

At one time all woodwork in rooms was painted white, and this treatment, with its cleanliness and comfort, has been revived by some modern architects, as by Mr. Walter Cave.

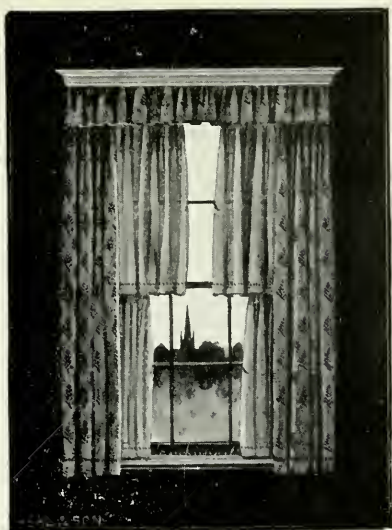
But I do not recommend the use of white for *all* windows. Most suburban windows are pretentiously bad in workmanship, and white frames and sash-bars

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would make them more conspicuous, like impudent-looking eyes with painted lashes and eyebrows. Jerry-built houses look best from outside when the window-frames and sash-bars are dark-coloured.

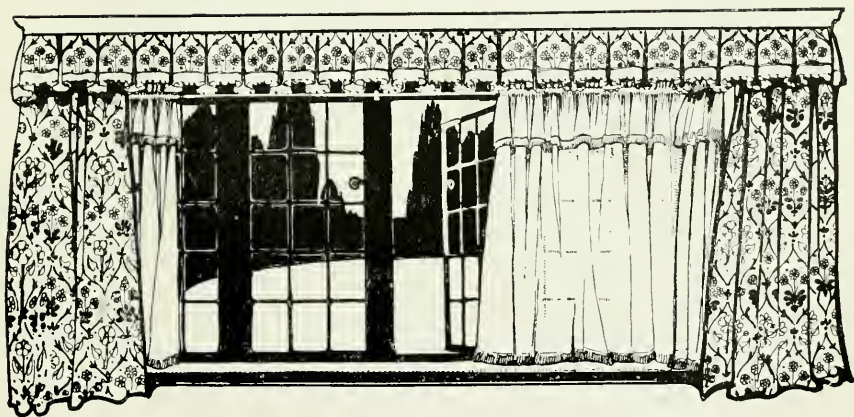
It seems worth while to mention a few other facts which should be kept in mind when flats and houses have to be chosen. Many persons have a passion for very big windows, forgetting that a large surface of cold glass produces a draught during the winter months; for the warmed air is chilled by it all day long, and the chilled air is driven into the room by the heated air which displaces it. These back-draughts from icy window-panes usually pass unnoticed, but they do much harm in the course of a year. Much impure air, coming in contact with the glass, cannot rise above the breathing zone of our dwelling-rooms; hence it is always difficult in winter to get a good ventilation accompanied by sufficient warmth. Windows of a moderate size are best for household comfort and health; moderate size, namely, in correct proportion with the area of wall surface. A good housewife should consider all these points, and notice also how windows are placed in their relation to doors and fireplaces. Jerry-builders have invented many draughts, their bad grates needing a breeze to make them "draw."

There is also another matter, and that is the absurd way in which sash-bars are whittled down till they are too thin to be noticed at a little distance. The aim is to give a glazed window the appearance of a clear



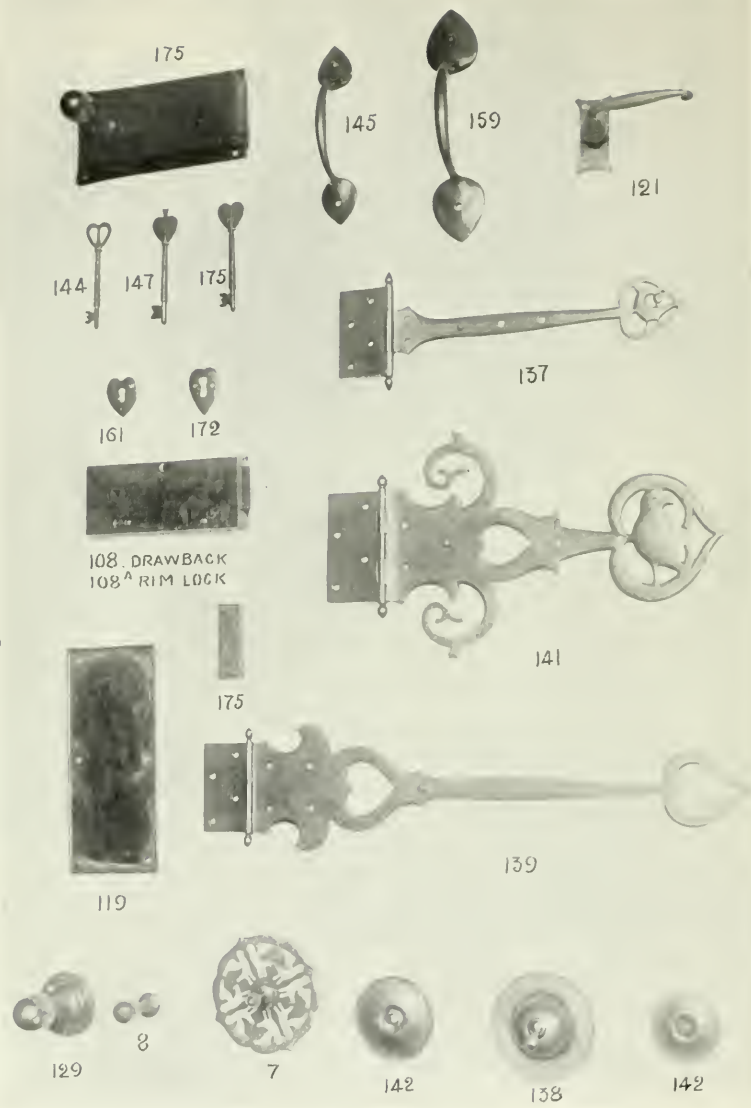
CURTAIN BLINDS ADAPTED TO
A SASH WINDOW

The upper curtains are drawn by a
light pulley and line



INNER CASEMENT BLINDS MADE OF HEAL & SON'S CASEMENT FLAX

Which may be bought in many tints, both plain and figured



BRONZE FITTINGS

Designed by C. F. A. VOYSEY, Architect, and made by THOMAS ELSLEY, Ltd. London

WINDOWS, BLINDS, AND CURTAINS

opening, a foolish deception, since windows without glass would be unserviceable in modern England. Good architects never fail to let us know that their windows are glazed, and you have only to look at a Queen Anne house, so called, to see the value of thick sash-bars and of broad window-frames, which seem to continue the wall surface over the windows. Looking at a window from outside, we ought to see clearly that it is not a void, an open hole; and in a room we should be conscious that there is some adequate protection between us and the cold air out of doors. A plain sheet of glass, being transparent, is like an open space unguarded; there is nothing definite to tell us that the window is glazed.

In a great many houses children might walk through big window-panes and hurt themselves dangerously, not seeing the glass by which the rooms are separated from the balconies. Such accidents have occurred during the last thirty years. They enforce the old lesson, to which I am constantly returning, that everything in household art must be fit for its purpose, and assure us by its look that it is so.

In any photograph of houses you will see that those windows look well in which the sash-bars are strongly marked, while those with large sheets of glass make vacant spaces in the solid walls and are ugly. Our forefathers had better taste. They knew the value of strong mullions and transoms, they liked small window-panes leaded into picturesque and simple patterns; and

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when sash windows came into vogue they put in plenty of strong wood. Englishmen from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century loved daylight quite as much as we do, only they were accustomed to structural work in architecture, while we are not.

Indeed, for some reason hard to explain, we are amazingly irrational in our professed love for light and air. After building windows too big for our rooms, and after covering them with large panes of glass set in very thin sash-bars, we talk loudly about the comfort of light, and then get rid of that comfort with thick blinds and superabundant curtains. This done, we are content. Men of science complain, and architects point out that glazed openings in a wall are dangerous when the eye does not see at once that they are glazed. To these protests we listen unmoved, reason having little chance when conventions become stereotyped.

Yet we do not waste time if we try to think for a few moments about the use of blinds and curtains. What is your opinion concerning Venetian blinds, for example? Are they attractive and convenient? Is it a pleasure to move them up and down? Do they get out of order? Are children tempted to let them fall with a rattle, as if a gatling gun had been fired in honour of Papa and Mamma? Is there enough sunlight in our drab towns to justify the ostentatious fear of the sun's heat that Venetian blinds compel us to show off?

These are questions which you must answer in your own way. To me it seems clear that Venetian blinds

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are out of place in the British Isles. If I had to choose between them and the folly of wearing kilts and tartans in Venice, I should hesitate which to select. Shutters, too, are out of date: they vanished with the public dangers which kept them in vogue for many centuries. As late as sixty years ago London houses were built with shutters on the second floor, as if thieves were acrobats and policemen blind. To-day, happily, shutters are relics of history, like body armour and hoop petticoats.

Our windows need nothing more than blinds, and a blind is a simple thing with us, having but two purposes to serve:

1. To protect rooms during the day from any direct sunlight which might harm pictures and bleach wall-papers and textile fabrics.

2. To act as a screen after dark so that the family life in rooms may not be spied upon from outside when the artificial lights are on.

A textile fabric is all that we require for these purposes, sufficiently opaque for evening use, but not so thick as to keep *all* sunlight from refreshing our rooms by day. This point is, of course, very important. Sunlight is health in our northern homes. If a sun blind is too thin for evening use, a second blind should be put up, *inside the window*. Those blinds outside windows, which on rare occasions do duty as awnings, pay too much honour to the few hot days which come to us now and then in July and August. Hotels with

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awnings may be right, having the charm of indiscreet advertisements; they seem to say publicly that no visitor shall get a sunburnt complexion within their walls. "Here everybody is swaddled in comfort," they appear to say; "for the mild uncertainties of a British summer need Indian protections against heat." Can it be the national sense of humour that sets up so many barricades against the sun's kind attacks?

However that may be, we bask contentedly in much imagined heat. Many blinds are thick enough to hide the glare from a burning house across the street; and even their colour is often thought of in connection with a vivid light which is not to be found in the British Isles. Some households like thick blue blinds, others red, and a great many feel at ease with a drab-yellow material.

It is forgotten that a blind should be a passive agent in the art of furnishing, and this it cannot be if its colour gives a strong tint to the light which passes through it. For this reason, then, a blind should be neutral in colour, not red and positive, nor blue and coldly assertive. The colour, too, in addition to being neutral, must have a tint which direct sunlight does not bleach.

But there are neutral tints of many sorts. Which are the best for blinds?

In this matter a useful hint may be borrowed from print-sellers, who have a firm belief in the beautifying light that comes through a white substance. Note how

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they sell an etching. The print or the proof lies between a folded sheet of thin white paper, and when a clever salesman displays it to a customer he lifts the paper near a window, so that light may pass through the raised leaf on to the etching. This trick, even when tested on water-colour drawings and oil-pictures, has a transfiguring result ; and hence we may conclude that white blinds are the most favourable for our principal rooms, the least likely to disturb our schemes of colour. Not a cold, staring white, of course, but ivory-white, warm and beautiful.

Some friends of mine like straw tints, but these, I believe, though excellent for window-curtains of Nun's Cloth, are too yellowy for blinds, in which the warmest white ought not to be more than cream-coloured. Those shades, known as coffee tints, and those to be found in Tussock silks, are not pleasant against the light, nor do they look well from outside, a point to be remembered always in window-decoration. White blinds, to be sure, are quickly soiled in towns, but less so than shirts, collars, and other necessities. Let us do what is best—and pay the cost in washing bills. We don't wear blue wristbands or scarlet collars. Why use blue and scarlet blinds when white is much better? Eastlake says that for summer blinds there is scarcely a better material than that which is known as "Swiss Lace." It is made of stout thread-cotton, and worked in two or three small patterns which are well-defined. It is apt to shrink a little in washing, but otherwise it is really

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useful—more so, indeed, than a good many more expensive materials.

Next, as regards bedroom blinds. Do they not interfere with that circulation of air through the windows concerning which all the world talks? Many persons open their bedroom windows at top and bottom, then pull down some thick blue blinds, draw heavy curtains, and yet retain their belief in the urgent necessity of sleep accompanied by fresh air. The imagination may be stimulated, but the fresh air is out of doors. Other persons, having no sense of humour, sleep with their heads outside the windows, and don't know what comical figures they look. Excess always has been the enemy of progress. It kills many good movements in England. Open-air sleep is a splendid tonic in a good climate, but human nature rebels against it in the dust and fogs of northern cities. Fresh air without draughts—that is the ventilation we need in bedrooms; and surely we may get it without giving way to fads which make us irritably self-conscious. To give incessant thought to health is a form of mental weakness.

If blinds and curtains were done away with in bedrooms, the two necessary things—privacy and fresh air—could be got in several ways. The window-panes could be of stained or painted glass; this, of course, would hide the views outside, but the purpose of a bedroom window has no connection with views. It is there to catch the morning sun, to light the room and to keep it pure with fresh air. These are the points

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to be considered ; it is a matter of no consequence if the panes of glass are opaque. Yet, as one of the pleasures of life is to be irrational, we rebel against the suggestion of stained glass for windows and then cover up transparent glass with curtains. The lower sash is nearly always curtained, so that part, at least, might be in opaque glass.

Again, a new kind of window-curtain might be invented—a sort of awning inside bedrooms, moved up and down along curved metal bars running from the cornice of the window recess to the skirting. The awning itself would be perforated well at top and also at the bottom, to allow free ventilation between the room and the open window ; and the curved bars would form a good air-space behind the curtain. At the sides the awning would be open. With this arrangement, if the lower window-sash were glazed with painted glass, the usual curtains would be unnecessary, and the room at night could be kept fresh and invigorating.

The trouble is that the dressing-table, even in these days of electric light, is usually put within a foot of the window, with the result that a wet night does harm if the window is opened and the blind up. But if the necessity of fresh air is to be a real thing to us, not mere talk, the dressing-table must have a window of its own or be moved elsewhere, and the rain allowed to splash in at the main window.

Then, as to curtains in general, I hesitate to speak about them, partly because householders like them,

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despite the criticisms offered by men of science, and partly because many trades depend for their success on curtain materials. The science of health has not a word to say in the favour of curtains, not even when they are nothing more than washable textiles hanging by the "Neta" clips* from thin metal bars along the wood-work of windows.† Carpets may be cleaned daily with pneumatic sweepers, while curtains (as a rule) are fixed to a big rod or pole and hold the dust which they collect; hold it till incoming air dislodges some part of it. We cannot move a curtain without circulating dust and germs.

On the other hand, most window openings are designed for curtains and would look naked without them; hence a compromise must be hit upon. Perhaps the most familiar curtains are those which in pairs weigh about a quarter of a ton, suggesting either a degree of cold, arctic enough to rejoice the Polar bear at the Zoo., or a searching daylight quite unknown to us. These curtains hang for months at a time without being freed from dust by a thorough shaking out of doors. It is odd how uncleanly we are when custom gives permission.

* Neta curtain clips are much better than the old-fashioned curtain pins and rings. A sample dozen costs 1s. 6d., 34 Strand, London, W.C.

† In some catalogues, as in those published by Story and Co., Kensington, London, illustrations are given of historic fashions in the use of window curtains.

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Years ago, when living among landladies, I persuaded one good dame to take down a wonderful display of curtains. Some were in coffee-coloured "lace," so-called, lace ornamented with big scrolls, sprawling leaves, and queer designs like vases turned upside down. Elves might do such work to delight a mad fairy queen. Yet my landlady loved those curtains, and declined to put them up by themselves, without a solid drapery to protect their beauty. A foot of lace might be exhibited: then came yards of vermilion cloth looped up into folds. How long these outer curtains had been there I do not know, but the folds were full of dust; and imagine the contrast between the coffee-tinted lace and the vermilion draperies! With great tact I suggested to my landlady that such curtains were too good to be used daily, that lavender and a cupboard belonged to them by right, and that I would welcome their presence on Bank Holidays. Despite this persuasion, my "uncivil haction" was resented, and the curtains were put back whenever I left town for a few days.

To understand the conservatism of many women is a problem not to be solved by men. Window curtains are guarded by it in a multitude of households; and so I offer with diffidence the following hints:

1. Curtains are made for rooms, not rooms for curtains; so why should the lesser things appear to contain the greater?

2. Curtain materials should be light in weight. Heavy curtains imply that modern servants are idola-

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trously fond of work, which is untrue. Besides, when the removal of a curtain is an athletic exercise followed by pains in the back, neither mistress nor maid is happier.

3. Curtains are not improved when looped up into dustbins.

4. As windows should give light and air, not a settled twilight, curtains ought not to block up the window recesses, but hang at the sides decoratively. Blindman's Buff is not a game to be played with windows and curtains.

5. Curtains with horizontal bands or stripes, though effective in well-chosen materials, make low rooms seem lower, while upright lines give height to low rooms.

6. Nun's Cloth is a good curtain material; it goes well with many schemes of decoration, having the tints of ripe English corn. Write to Burnett's, Long Acre, London.

7. Dark green—deep peacock green—is another colour that sorts well with many decorative effects.

8. The point to be decided is the relation between your curtains and the floors and walls. Walls and floors should oppose each other, that is, should have colours that contrast harmoniously; and remember always, in this connection, that if you repeat the same local colour in your carpet and your wall decoration, you produce timid harmonies that become tiresome, monotonous. It is contrast that gives life to a colour-scheme. Curtains, therefore, while according with the

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floor and the walls, ought to enter into your contrastive effects. This may be done in several ways. The curtains may repeat the carpet and oppose the walls, or be in harmonious opposition to both, forming a separate and distinct contrast to be repeated, let us say, in the table-cover and in plain hearth-tiles.

9. If you wish to use patterned curtains in gay tints, remember that springtime effects of colour are as easy to mismanage in decorative art as love poems are easy to miswrite.

10. Messrs. Morris and Co., 449 Oxford Street, London, like Messrs. Story and Co., of Kensington, have many excellent figured curtain stuffs which are easy to use well, their patterns being unassertive. One material, known as the Swivel Damask, is in tints of beautiful blue, not in the least steely and cold, and so they fall into harmony with many combinations of colour. The Little Anemone Damask is good, and the Mohair Damask also; but, of course, all textile fabrics are points in one general scheme of decoration, and cannot be considered merely by themselves.

11. For a good many years now—indeed, ever since the æsthetic craze of the “seventies” and “eighties”—much time has been given to the production of pale tints for textile fabrics. They look beautiful in shop windows, and artists borrow hints from them. A famous Belgian painter used to rave about these “English colours,” standing for long half-hours before certain shop-windows, “to fill his eye,” as he said with enthu-

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siasm. Yet these colours have as a rule no real substance: they look artificial, overbred, not unlike those variegated poppies which have ousted from our gardens the alert, old-fashioned variety. In a lady's boudoir they may be effective, but they remind me always of Titania and her fairies. They would be delightful in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. If a strong man tried to live with these diaphanous colours, would he not feel rather ashamed of his good health? It is a question of taste. Yet I venture to think that we have more to learn about colour from English roses and field flowers than from exotic plants in the hot-houses at Kew Gardens, where the colours in question seem to have had their origin.

12. Another point. All good colour is "bright," not vivid. Many persons misunderstand the meaning of the word "bright," and connect it at once with pale tints of a brilliant hue. "Bright" means that a good colour has life, like a true note struck from a musical instrument. Bright is the antithesis of "drab," nondescript colour without life; and this fact is a guide in the choice of textile fabrics for home use.

13. Shopkeepers offer for sale many materials which, though beautiful by themselves, have not the mixed tints composed by artists and most likely to go well with other good colours. All artistic colour is a mixture, and the most useful tints are those in which the three primaries—yellow, red, and blue—are to some extent present. Cobalt, for instance, has a pinky tinge

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denoting the presence of red, while indigo has a green tinge showing the presence of yellow; and from these blues a great variety of tints can be made, all with broken qualities. Study the blues in nature and in art, and note in them the presence of the other primaries. You will soon learn that blue is blue in a very subtle way, and that you hesitate to put a name on it.

14. Yellow, again, to be useful in art, must not be positive, but varied like amber, or deliciously grey and sweet like a primrose.

15. The finest reds are many-hued, ranging from transparent ruby to deep purple.

16. The safe greens in decoration have in them a touch of red. Hence a good dyer, after treating his material in the indigo vat, not only greens it with a good yellow, but adds what else may be necessary (as, *e.g.*, madder) to modify the colour.

17. Remember, then, that a good colour is never too much itself: never too green, too yellow, too red, or too anything else; and hence the brightness of a good colour never comes forward, does not seem near to your eyes, but keeps with distinction a certain aloofness. It has all the qualities of good breeding. For this reason, when in a shop, turn from those colours which attract immediate attention. They are too loquacious to be pleasant companions.

18. In curtains as in other materials some colours should be put aside at once as impossible. I have mentioned them before, but here they are again: vermillion,

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emerald-green, terra-cotta, puce, light vivid greens, and what painters call “sad” tints, *i.e.*, tints without life, dull and drab, or washy and insipid.

Colour being the sunshine of art, you cannot give too much thought and observation to its harmonies.



THE MARLOWE TAPESTRY

A canvas ground with Elizabethan design

Messrs. STORY & Co., London

CHAPTER VII

TEXTILE FABRICS

WE have already considered several kinds of textile fabrics in their relation to structural parts of the house, floors, and walls, and windows; and the decorative principles that govern their design have been stated and illustrated. Nothing more need be said about tapestries, carpets, and curtains, except this: that their selection requires infinite patience and care. Two difficulties have to be faced and both are exceedingly trying. The one, of course, is a plethora of pattern, often too realistic and obtrusive; while the second is a choice of such old designs as happen to be too "fussy." The notion that all ancient designs are good is wrong, yet this fact is not remembered by many manufacturers, who go to great expense in reproducing for household use a hurried selection of old textiles.

In many ways, and particularly in the daily costumes worn by women and men, life is much simpler now than it used to be; and the ancient fabrics which have come down to us—tapestries, brocades, and so forth—were made for home surroundings more splendid than our own, for they appealed to the rich at a time when dress was very costly and luxurious. This ought never to be

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

forgotten, though it often is, especially by manufacturers, who try to adapt for our ordinary houses much work that belongs in style and character to a vanished type of society, so different from ours that it seems unreal when good acting sets it before us in costumed plays. Unless we study art in its relation to social manners and customs, we cannot understand its spirit, nor learn how to divide its characteristics into those which are useful to us because they are permanent, and those which have no value now because they represent dead customs or spent fashions.

Hence, if we wish to use old designs on modern textile fabrics, we must think of them from two points of view :

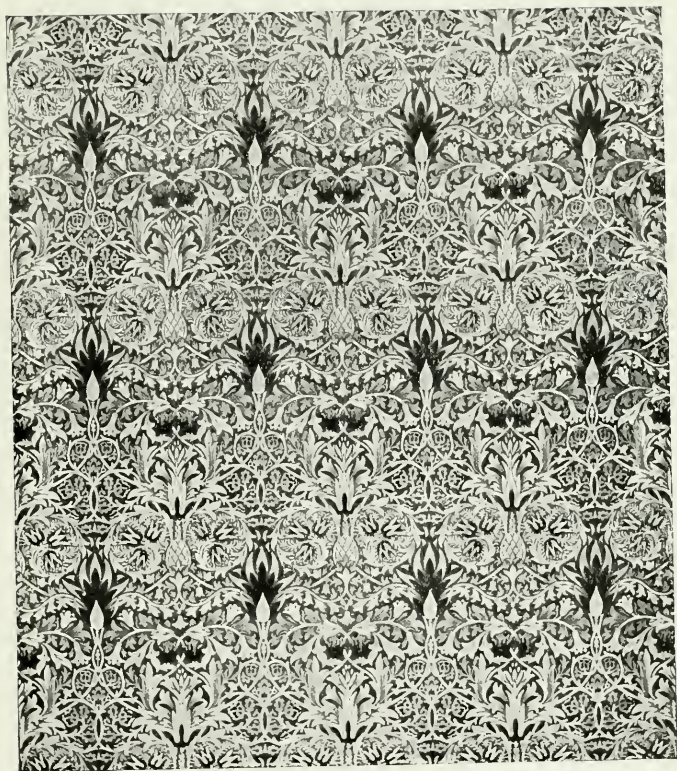
1. Are they permanently good, or do they belong to an outworn fashion ?

2. Are they in harmony with our modest home life and with our climate ?

Patterns on beautiful rich draperies which looked splendid in Italian palaces of the time of Raphael, are absurd to-day on linen curtains in a London villa. Borrowed patterns have much in common with borrowed money : they lead to trouble unless we give security for their proper use. The necessary thing is to show a certain quality which is not often exhibited in shop windows—namely, judgment in matters of taste.

What do we gain if we borrow from the eighteenth century, a period when textile fabrics were ornamented by a declining art ? Why return to the early Victorian times, when their decorative styles have been laughed

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LINEX FABRIC
The Snake-Head Pattern

Designed by WILLIAM MORRIS, and made by MORRIS & CO.



TEXTILE FABRIC

The Pomegranate Pattern

Designed by WILLIAM MORRIS, and made by MORRIS & Co.

TEXTILE FABRICS

at by all connoisseurs during the last fifty years? To learn lessons from the past we must go to the best periods of design, and note with care those patterns which are too quiet to be at all "fussy" in our small rooms. Perhaps the manufacturers will make a note?

Then there is another trouble. A book on Furnishing must give illustrations, yet the author knows very well that small blocks give a false idea of patterned textiles, carpets, and paperhangings. Even if they give the colours approximately, they cannot show the size or scale of any design; and the most useful patterns for home use are often the least effective in a book. Thus the illustrations, though chosen with care from the best shops, are not published without fear and scruple. They cannot be guides to the choice of textile fabrics, since the question of choice differs with the many circumstances by which our rooms and our needs are made what they are, infinitely various. It is only by testing the effect which a fabric makes *in situ*, and in relation to other things, that its value to us can be ascertained.

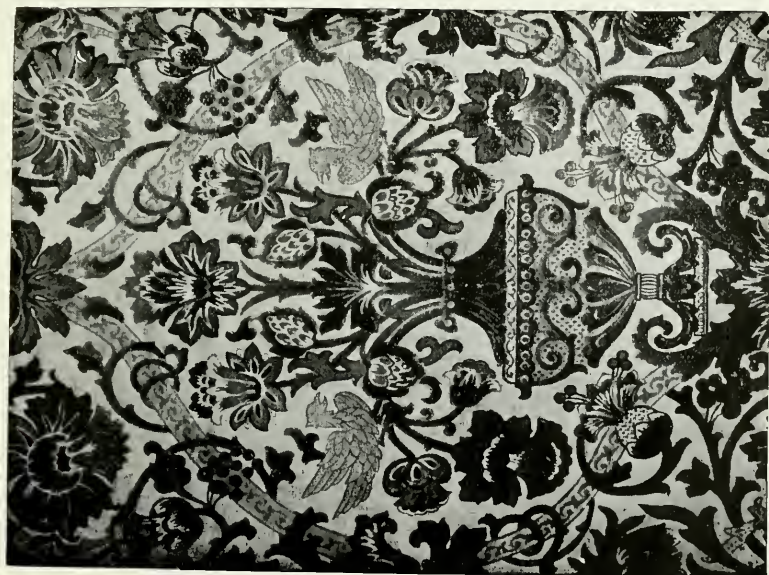
William Morris used to say that householders should go to the South Kensington Museum and study invaluable fragments of stuffs weaved in Syria and Sicily during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, or the almost equally beautiful webs of Persian design, which are later in date, but instinct with the purest and best Eastern feeling. "They may also note the splendid stuffs produced mostly in Italy in the later Middle Ages, which are unsurpassed for richness and *effect* of design,

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and when they have impressed their minds with the productions of this great historic school, let them contrast with them the work of the vile Pompadour period, passing by the early seventeenth century as a period of transition into corruption. They will then (if they have real artistic perception) see at once the difference between the results of irrepressible imagination and love of beauty, on the one hand, and, on the other, of restless and weary vacuity of mind, forced by the exigencies of fashion to do something or other to the innocent surface of the cloth in order to distinguish it in the market from other cloths."

There can be no doubt that William Morris gave excellent advice, and followed it himself, usually, in his own textile fabrics. But then, will housewives be willing to go to South Kensington and there fill their eyes with the best colours and patterns? If so, they will need no other help. All the principles dealt with in this book are taken from the masters of design, though my own dislike for even slight realism in applied ornament is to a certain extent a personal preference. The masters are never realistic in a pictorial way, but some are nearer to the truth of natural forms than others. William Morris summed up this matter by referring to "the simple and fresh beauty that comes of a sympathetic *suggestion* of natural forms": adding—

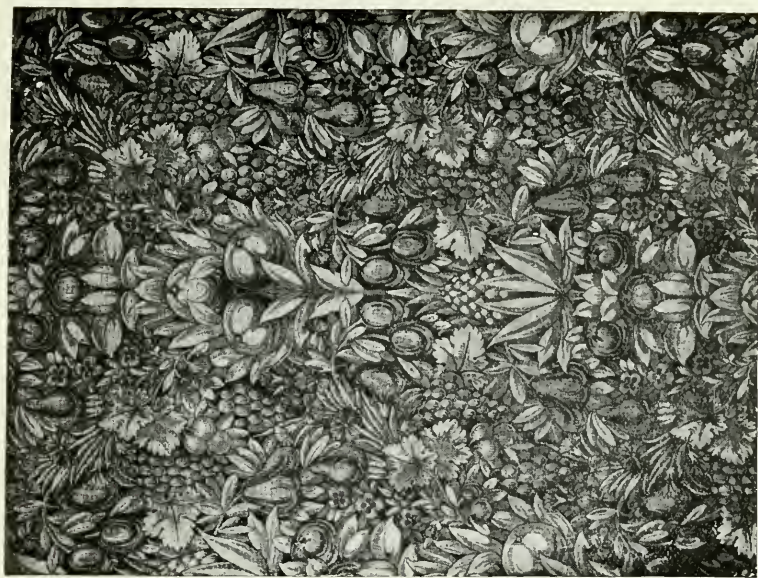
"If the pattern be vigorously and firmly drawn with a true feeling for the beauty of line and silhouette. the



THE ANGELO TISSUE

An example of Italian design and colouring,
the tints green in contrast with red

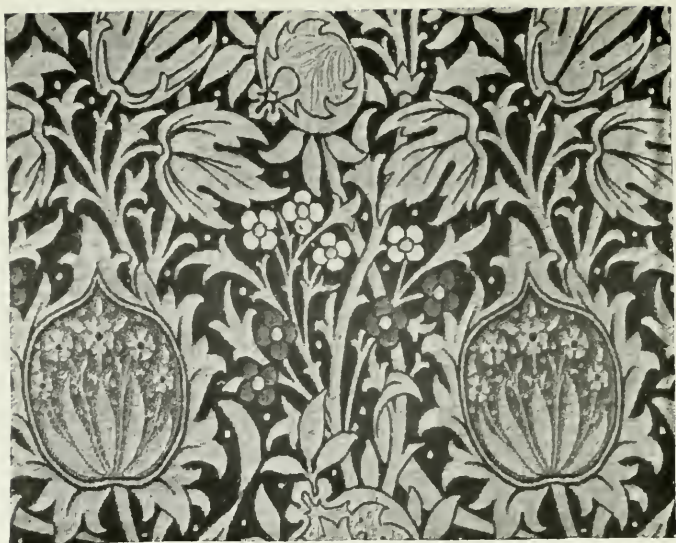
Messrs. STORY & Co., Kensington High Street, London, W.



THE LYNTON TAPESTRY

For a library or a dining-room. Ground colours in
green and red, or green and blue

Messrs. STORY & Co., Kensington High Street, London, W.



“ELMCOTE” HAND-WOVEN TAPESTRY

Designed by WILLIAM MORRIS, and made by MORRIS & Co.



THE “TULIP AND NET” HAND-WOVEN WOOL TAPESTRY

Indigo-blue Colouring

Designed by WILLIAM MORRIS, and made by MORRIS & Co.

TEXTILE FABRICS

play of light and shade on the material of the simple twill will give all the necessary variety."

And here are three other principles by the same master :

1. The aim should be to combine clearness of form and firmness of structure with the mystery which comes of abundance and richness of detail. This guiding rule is taken from the great epochs of textile art, when fabrics of Syrian and Sicilian manufacture were at their best ; but it is a dangerous rule to carry into practice under our industrial system, and, more than once, it got Morris himself into trouble. A good many of his designs just touch that unhappy point where abundance and richness of detail cease to make mystery and begin to fatigue the eye. Morris, too, was aware that his rule was difficult to apply, particularly in flat painted decoration and in wall-papers, because in these the repeating pattern is spread out flat against the wall, while textiles usually hang in folds that break up the pattern more or less.

2. Do not introduce any lines or objects which cannot be explained by the structure of the pattern. Why ? Morris replies : " It is just this logical sequence of form, this growth which looks as if, under the circumstances, it could not have been otherwise, which prevents the eye wearying of the repetition of the pattern." Only,

3. *Never introduce any shading for the purpose of making an object look round ;* whatever shading you use should be used for explanation only, to show what you

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

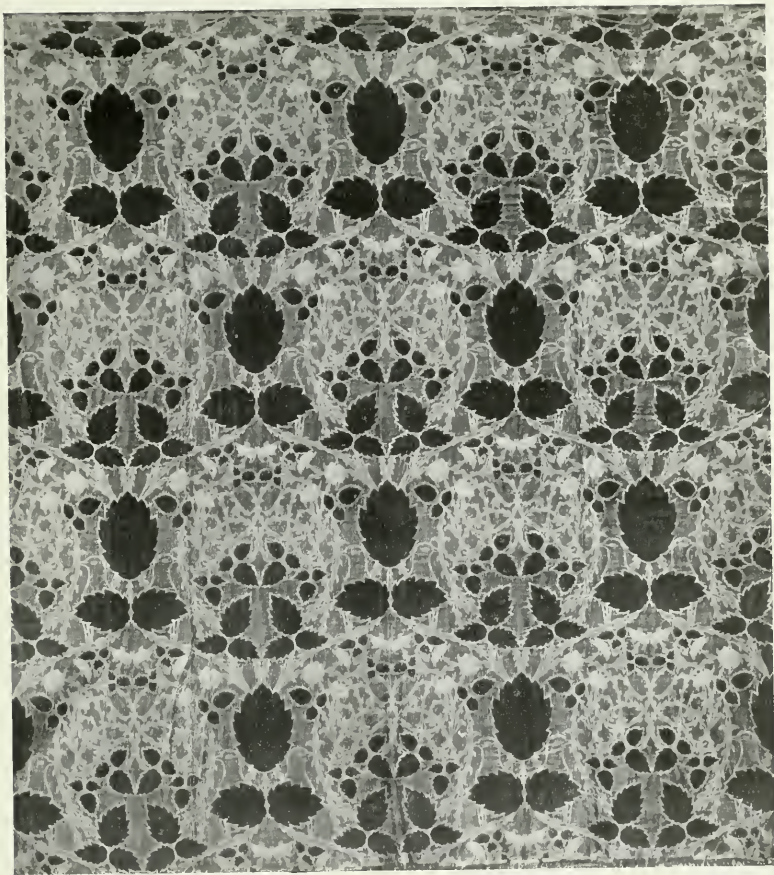
mean by such and such a piece of drawing ; *and even that you had better be sparing of.*"

4. "Never forget the material you are working with, and try always to use it for doing what it can do best. It is the pleasure in understanding the capabilities of a special material, and using them for *suggesting* (not imitating) natural beauty and incident, that gives the *raison d'être* of decorative art."

These principles and others will be found in every chapter of this book, and they show how very careful you must be in your home decorations. All questions of choice rest with you, and a modern shop fatigues the eye and the mind quite as much as the selection of pictures for an exhibition. Shopkeepers have begun to understand this fact, and some of them issue catalogues in colour of furnishing fabrics, so that housewives may make a first choice from colour-prints before seeing the textiles. It is a good idea and should be carried further.

If this good beginning be followed by much larger catalogues of the same kind, housewives will be spared many headaches and a great waste of time, because they will be able to tell from three or four books where they are most likely to find what they need for a given purpose.

Under each reproduction in colour the manufacturers should say in what manner the textile is printed, whether by machine with aniline dyes, or by blocks and the old dye-stuffs and methods. Hand-printing by



CURTAIN

Designed by C. F. A. VOYSEY, Architect, London



THE SILVERTOWN TAPESTRY

MESSRS. STORY & Co., Kensington, London, W.

TEXTILE FABRICS

blocks, as William Morris pointed out, is subject pretty much to the same laws of design as govern carpets: "only, in the first place, more play of delicate and pretty colour is possible, and more variety of colour also; and, in the second, much more use can be made of hatching and dotting, which are obviously suitable to the method of block-printing. In the many-coloured printed cloths, frank red and blue are again the mainstays of the colour arrangement; these colours, softened by the paler shades of red, outlined with black and made more tender by the addition of yellow in small quantities, mostly forming part of brightish greens, make up the colouring of the old Persian prints, which carry the art as far as it can be carried."

Another point of great interest gave much concern to William Morris, namely, the harmful effect which Japanese art has had on English household taste. The Japanese are splendid draughtsmen, admirable naturalists, and wonderful in their mastery of hand-craft; but they have not a true feeling either for architecture or for applied ornament. The Chinese have been their superiors in decorative intuition or instinct. The Japanese are masters of a style which has no value at all unless it is managed with Japanese sleight of hand, a gift encouraged from early youth by the custom of writing with a brush. "Their works of art (said Morris) are isolated and blankly individualistic, and in consequence, unless where they rise, as they sometimes do, to the dignity of a suggestion for a picture (always

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devoid of human interest), they remain mere wonderful toys, things quite outside the pale of the evolution of art, which cannot be carried on without the architectural sense that connects it with the history of mankind."

That is true, no doubt, but the fascination of Japanese art is another truth, and it has misled many English people in their embroideries and in their home surroundings. Not only does it take us away from our own good traditions of decorative design, but it reconciles us to naturalist methods of work which we neither want nor are able to imitate with success. Art, indeed, has become so wildly cosmopolitan that many of us forget to pay attention to the best traditional methods and ideals; and hence we are rather startled when a writer brings us back to useful first principles, such as may be found in the Gothic arts and in some kinds of Eastern manufacture.

Remember always that the nearer you get to the great epochs of art, which lie between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, the closer you come to the main principles of decorative design and colour, the only sure guides through the pitfalls that lie about the feet of any one who furnishes a house. The study of good old work, then, is of the highest importance, is essential, not because you wish to copy it slavishly, but because you learn from it *why* it is good, and what you must shun in our modern fashions if your home is to be a lasting joy to you.

CHAPTER VIII

ARTIFICIAL HEAT AND LIGHT

ONE of the most serious problems in household life is the cost of heating rooms in winter. We keep tenaciously to open fireplaces, and we burn coal, though its winter price in towns has given it a new name—black gold. Whatever coal-masters may receive for it at the pit-mouth, where the price per ton often shows only a small profit, householders benefit not at all, for coal becomes shockingly dear after a middleman has bought it for distribution in thronged cities and urban districts. With a spell of nipping black frost, when chilblains are more numerous than children, and far more troublesome than parents (so the children say), it is then that coal rises by shillings above a normal high price; while in summer we get plaintive intimations from middlemen that coal has “gone down” owing to the dog-days, and that a winter stock should be taken in at once; the dealers knowing that not one family in fifty has a store-place big enough to hold even two tons. A bird caught with its leg in a trap is perhaps as ineffectual as we are when we flutter into rebellion against our coal bills, and remember that the more urgently we need fuel the higher we raise the cost of it to our own hurt.

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

If we got in our rooms all the heat generated by burning coal, our troubles would be less annoying ; but, with our system of open fireplaces, and the keen draughts that pass under doors to the hearth, a great deal of heat goes up the chimney, bearing with it our pence and shillings. A French household would be thrown into a panic by that want of thrift, while we accept it as we do the Income Tax, grumbling a little, no doubt, but with a patience inured to futile discontent. Those who grumble much do not act with energy ; very seldom do they go beyond feeble compromises.

There is but one way in which coal can be burnt without loss to the finance of housekeeping : open fireplaces must give place to well-made stoves, or to a heating system worked from a furnace in the cellar or in the back garden. Some London flats are warmed by this means. But the average Briton pines for the open hearth. "I like to see my fire," he says ; "it attracts the eye, it looks bright and cheery, it is hospitable." He forgets that he is happy with an empty grate during the summer, and that he would be so in winter also, if his rooms were warm and pleasant.

Open fireplaces being a national tradition, we must make the best of them, and happily we are helped by many useful inventions : so many, indeed, that we should seek advice from experts. Four good grates are known to me, and to these I may draw attention, leaving each reader to look for others :

1. The "Devon" Fire, made by Messrs. Candy and Co.,

ARTIFICIAL HEAT AND LIGHT

Heathfield Station, Newton Abbot, Devon. This grate was put first in recent official tests carried out in the New Government Offices by H.M. Office of Works and the Smoke Abatement Society. Thirty-six different grates competed, and the Devon Fire consumed the least fuel and produced the least smoke.

2. Castle Baynard Hearth Fires, made by Alexander Ritchie and Co., 12 Upper Thames Street, London, E.C. These grates can be made to suit any existing chimney-piece openings. They are moderate in price, simple, clean, and economical. The catalogue is well illustrated.

3. The Burkone Patent Barless Fire, made by the Standard Range and Foundry Co. Ltd., Watford, Herts. Gained the highest award at the Cardiff Health Exhibition 1908. Several well-known architects have designed work for these fireplaces, and notably Mr. Arnold Mitchell, and Mr. C. F. A. Voysey.

4. "The Heaped Fire," Messrs. Bratt, Colbran and Co., 10 Mortimer Street, London, W.

Then, as regards the use of gas for cooking, most families have tried it in towns, but not with encouraging results. Still, failure leads to success, and I may recommend the Appleton Portable Quick Ovens, made by the Quick Cooker Ltd., 118 to 122 Holborn, London, E.C.

Bread, meat, fish, puddings, &c., all are well done by these neat and simple ovens. The manufacturers say that their apparatus gets hot in one minute, while a coal

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

oven takes about an hour, and ordinary gas ovens from ten to fifteen minutes.

For information concerning the Air-Gas System, write to Messrs. W. A. S. Benson and Co., 82 New Bond Street, London, W.; to Cox's Air-Gas Co., Kentish Town Road, London, N.W.; to Mr. Ernest G. Mitchell, 192 Audrey House, Ely Place, London, E.C.; and to the National Air-Gas Co., Ltd., Bassishaw House, 70A Basinghall Street, London, E.C. Mr. W. A. S. Benson has issued a useful catalogue on the "Eos" Gas Apparatus, a very excellent thing for independent lighting.

From these practical matters we turn to their decorative side, which cannot receive too much attention, seeing that we all pride ourselves on our hearth-worship. We are devotees of the fireplace. Yet the ugliness we tolerate around that shrine is wonderful. Jerry-builders have done their very worst with the fireplace and hearth. In one large block of flats the grates bear the name of a coal merchant, and their activity makes a tenant poorer than he need be. When wasteful grates are accompanied by hideous tiles and by chimneypieces in accord with a jerry-builder's make-believe, homes are strictly modern and civilised, fulfilling all the conditions of supply and demand, or demand and supply. Jerry-builders represent the people's gullibility.

Nor is it easy to give advice, because the great majority of householders cannot afford to change their fireplaces and chimneypieces. These things, however



PORTION OF THE DINING-ROOM IN THE EARL OF CARLISLE'S HOUSE,
PALACE GREEN, KENSINGTON

SHOWING THE FRIEZE DESIGNED BY SIR E. BURNE JONES TO ILLUSTRATE THE "CUPID
AND PSYCHE" EPISODE IN WILLIAM MORRIS'S "EARTHLY PARADISE"

The decoration of the walls and ceiling designed by WILLIAM MORRIS and executed by MORRIS & Co.



FIREPLACE IN A LIBRARY

By R. S. LORIMER, A.R.S.A., Architect, Edinburgh

ARTIFICIAL HEAT AND LIGHT

bad they may be, are fixtures, and the eye loses all power of criticism when ugly bad work has to be accepted as inevitable year after year. Under our short leases we learn how to be reconciled to bad craftsmanship for our lifetime.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since Charles L. Eastlake wrote about the fireplaces which England enjoyed while France and Germany were at war ; enjoyed, though meretricious design was in vogue, and played the funniest pranks with grates, fenders, fire-irons, coal-scuttles, and chimneypieces. Eastlake found just fault with the popular fender, and his remarks should be read in a great many households to-day ; they run thus :

“The fenders, as usual, are elaborately vulgar. Manufacturers will persist in decorating them with a species of cast-iron ornament, which looks like a bad imitation of rococo carved work. Almost all cast-iron ornament (excepting the delicate patterns in very low relief, such as one sometimes sees on an old Sussex stove) is hopelessly ugly. The crisp, leafy decoration, and vigorous scrolls of ancient ironwork, were produced by the hammer and pliers. Bolts, straps, nails, and rivets, the proper and legitimate means of connecting the several parts, were never concealed, but were introduced and enriched in such a manner as not only to serve a practical purpose, but to become decorative features in themselves.”

But criticism should be followed by practical sugges-

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

tions. Cast-iron fenders are popular because they are inexpensive; and most of them are bad because the public does not know what ornament is good in cast iron. Ruskin went so far as to say that cast iron was an artistic solecism, impossible for the dual service of beauty and utility. But he spoke without reflection, as when he asked whether anything good ever came to us from China. Cast iron was a material for true artistic work during the fifteenth century, and the patterns made then were used at a much later date in Kent and Sussex; they remained in stock and were cast from a great many times. Gothic diapers were a common ornament, and vine leaves and tendrils, with heraldic badges, all in low relief, and the modelling soft and dull. On this subject Mr. W. R. Lethaby has written with his usual fine judgment; * it is to his research, and to that of Mr. Starkie Gardner, that we must look for guidance.

The best fire-grates of cast iron belong to about the middle of the eighteenth century, when they were made both with hobs and with close fronts, decorated all over the field with tiny flutings, and beads, and leaf mouldings, sometimes even with little figure medallions. The better examples, says Mr. Lethaby, are quite successful, both in form and in ornament, "which, adapted to this new purpose, does no more than gracefully acknowledge its debt to the past, just as the best ornament at all

* "Arts and Crafts Essays." By Members of the Arts and Crafts Society. Published by B. T. Batsford, London.

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times is neither original nor copied : it must recognise tradition, and add something which shall be the tradition of the future. The method followed is to keep the general form quite simple and the areas flat, while the decoration, just an embroidery of the surface, is of one substance and in the slightest possible relief." Mr. Lethaby sums up in these words :

"The pattern must have the ornament modelled, not carved, as is almost universally the case now, carving in wood being entirely unfit to give the soft suggestive relief required both by the nature of the sand-mould into which it is impressed, and by the crystalline structure of the metal when cast. Flat surfaces like grates may be decorated with some intricacy if the relief is delicate. *But the relief must be less than the basis of attachment, so that the moulding may be easily practicable, and no portions invite one to test how easily they might be detached.*"

We learn, then, that good ornament for cast iron has the following characteristics :

1. Soft modelling in delicate relief.
2. Modest and suggestive patterns based on those which the founder's art invented from the fifteenth century to the eighteenth. Good Italian ironwork is often pierced and incised, and this, too, is legitimate in casting.

And it is worth while to dwell upon these matters, because fenders and grates of cast iron, when thoroughly black-leaded, bring into the arrangement of our rooms

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

a useful colour, a black that sparkles and looks homely.

In connection with fenders there is one problem very difficult to solve conveniently. The word fender means defender, its purpose being to protect rooms from the sparks and the lighted fragments of coal which often fly out from a grate. Recently, when visiting a bedridden friend of mine, a red-hot cinder shot out from the fireplace and fell beyond the hearthrug; and although I picked it up at once, the carpet was singed to a brown tint. Had this accident occurred in the night, there would have been real danger. Fire-guards do not deserve all the confidence we put in their protection; and yet if we turn the fender into a good barricade, we keep from the room a great deal of heat. For this reason all efforts to introduce tall fenders have been unpopular. Mr. A. W. Blomfield made some excellent designs thirty-five years ago; other craftsmen followed his example; but the fenders that householders bought, then as now, cannot be looked upon as protections against fire, but as ornaments for the hearth. In other words, fenders are unfit for their use, and have to be re-inforced by movable fire-guards, which in their turn are not always effective, since burning embers may be shot over them by an explosion of gas in a lump of coal.

Open fires are troublesome indeed. What are we to do? Since tall fenders interpose between us and the very things we like in open fires, namely, their mild



CORNER OF A SMOKING ROOM IN A LONDON HOUSE

WALTER CAVE, F.R.I.B.A., *Architect*, London



A DRAWING-ROOM CHIMNEY-PIECE

R. S. LORIMER, A.R.S.A., *Architect*, Edinburgh

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warmth and their visible and homely cheeriness, that question is a hard nut to crack. Some persons answer it by using high fenders crowned with broad padded seats, which invite a whole family to sit down sideways and be angularly at ease: not a fortunate compromise. A fender with seats may be finely upholstered in bright leather, but it does not cheer you when you look at it from a few yards' distance; somehow it reminds you of those old-fashioned pews in out-of-the-way churches that rise up between your devotion and the preacher's ardour. In many houses the fenders are of a different kind, neither low nor high, and with a distinction that speaks about a good apprenticeship among metal-workers. They are old, and some are of bright steel pierced in a delicate fashion, while others are of gleaming brass or copper. They look well, but their brilliant qualities give emphasis to the fact that they are ornaments only, not protective guards; also—and this, too, is not unimportant—brass and burnished steel have not a workaday look, a practical and serviceable beauty, but suggest unwilling housemaids and abundant cleaning. It may be doubted whether suggestions of that kind are at all homely to-day. Severe experts might add, probably with perfect justice, that open hearths are not places where bright metals ought to be paraded. Still, there are many young persons whose greatest enjoyment is to hold to customs that their parents followed; and then, above all, there are the dear old ladies—more conservative by far than men—who sit near the chimney-

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

corner with their own long ago, and permit no change.

On the other hand, there are homes where the hearth is treated practically, a curb of stone or of terra-cotta taking the place of a metal fender. It bounds a stone hearth or a hearth of unglazed tiles, and pretends not at all to be a safeguard against fire. That protection is given by a sheet of plate glass framed in wrought-iron standards, or by trellised ironwork that stands up firmly. Stained glass might be used for the same purpose and be as effective as enamel; though the plain glass, no doubt, is preferable, because it does not hide the fire and its beautiful colours. Hearths treated in this way are pleasant, serviceable facts, without pretension. It does not matter if hot cinders fall on the hearthstones or on unglazed tiles, and the simple curb is a boundary neat and clean. There may be some risk from flying sparks and cinders, but danger cannot be separated entirely from the pleasures of an open fire.

In art, as in life, one bad compromise leads to another as bad; and so we find on thousands of fenders which do *not* defend an array of fire-irons which cannot be used. They are ornaments to be looked at and treated with the utmost delicacy. To tarnish their brightness with work—that, indeed, would be resented by women as a quite unpardonable folly. “Don’t you know,” said an aunt of mine years ago, “that beautiful polished steel is not meant to be put in a fire? Can’t you see the little iron poker, and is there not a shovel in the

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coal-box ?” Housewives still put the same questions to practical boys and girls, who have to be taught that fire-irons are unfit for use. What could be more absurd than a fender with unserviceable pokers and tongs ? If fire-irons are necessary, if they are not obsolete like fire-dogs, they ought to be *fire-irons*, not useless things in burnished steel and brass ; their size, too, should be in keeping with their service. Here is a perforated shovel with a handle a yard in length ; and here is a pair of tongs, so long that it seems intended to nip poisonous snakes by the neck. Why should a shovel be perforated ? and is such a long handle convenient ?

To be brief, the fireplace and its furniture are at odds with common sense. As moths fly into lighted candles, so the affected shams of our household life gather about the open hearth. There we find useless fenders, make-believe fire-irons, pretentious overmantels, cheap mirrors, pottery without value, and tiles so ornate that they make a bright fire look dull. In many homes plush curtains hang at the sides from the mantelshelf, while in others the mantelshelf is hidden by a bordering of amateur needlework. It appears that simplicity and truth must not keep company with expensive coal burning to waste in jerry-made fireplaces. Yet Carlyle’s criticism holds good : it is the “ modest serviceable fact, not the pretentious hypocrisy,” that we need in every detail of home decoration.

Even the coal-box has not often that plain utility which we find in cricket bats and in other sporting

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things designed for a particular use. Most coal-boxes make it an easy thing to sprinkle the carpets with bits of fuel ; then we turn to the perforated shovel, seize it by the long handle, and scrape up the coal-dust with difficulty, for it declines to balance itself on the edges of the perforations. Other coal-boxes are handsome works in dull copper, but a good many of them are made for some implement which is neither a shovel nor a pair of tongs. The best are bucket-shaped, open at the top, with a good handle, and holding not more coal than a housemaid can carry without fatigue upstairs. I have seen bucket-shaped coal-scuttles in various metals, the most effective being of copper, or of brass, or of dark-coloured wood hooped with bright metal. Their shape is convenient for several reasons :

1. It is not too high, so that coal is easy to get at with a small pair of tongs.

2. It is open at the mouth, showing the coal (which *ought* to be seen for the sake of its black colour), and warning servants that they will be found out if they break large coal into fragments.

3. We never know what a lidded coal-box may hold. Servants hate the duty of breaking fuel, and many large blocks are hammered carelessly into little bits, so we pay for lump coal and burn broken slack. But, when a scuttle is bucket-shaped, an open mouth tells good and bad tales about the servant's work down stairs.

Then, as to the best way of buying furniture for light and heat, I have already given some good addresses,

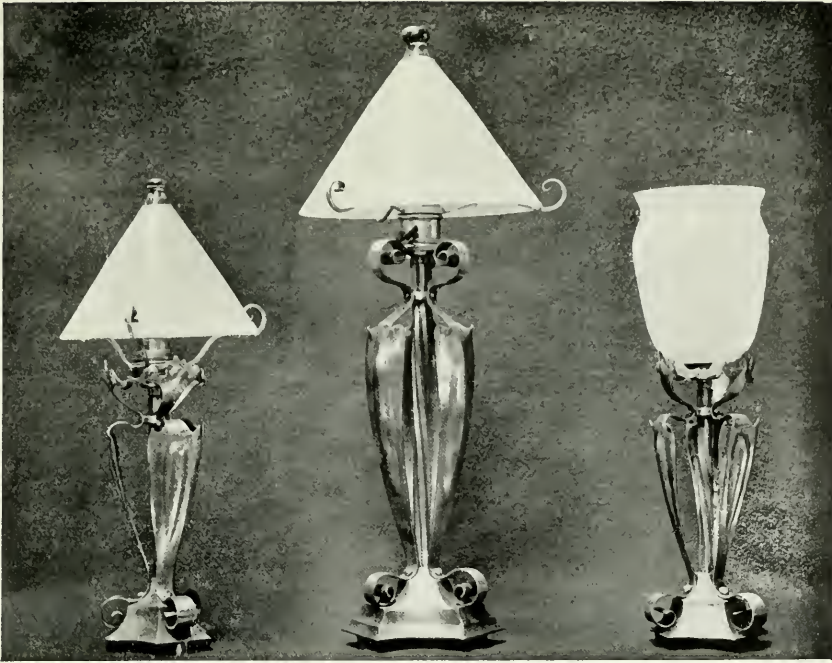
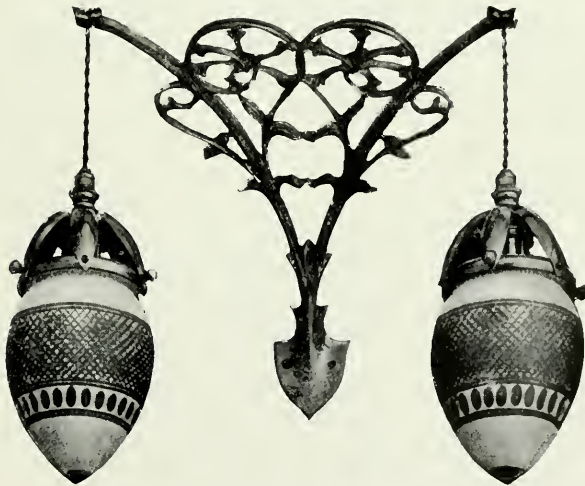


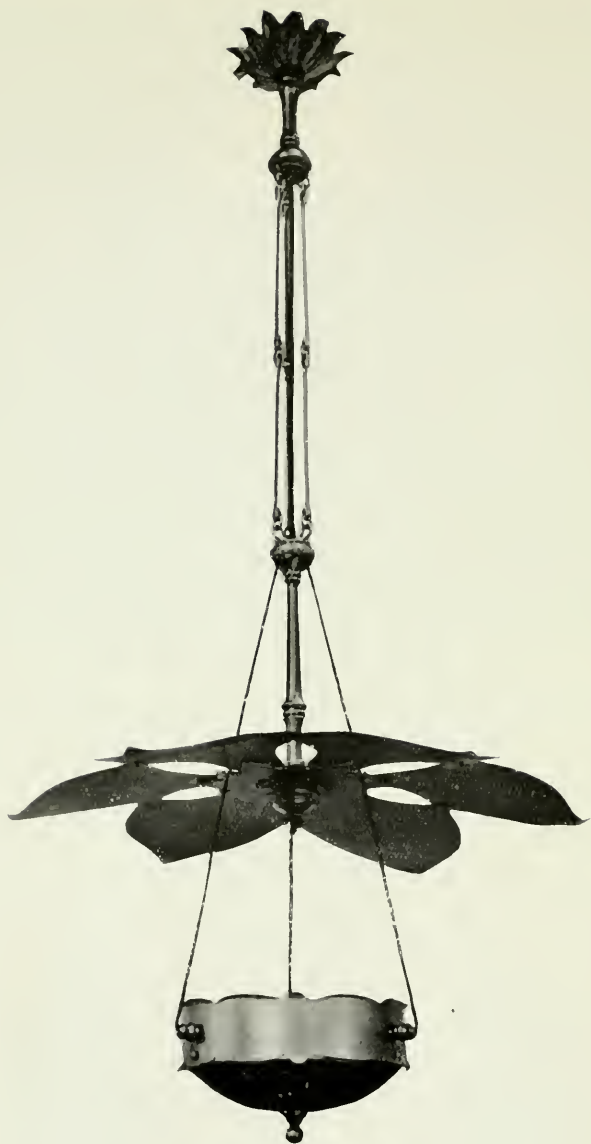
TABLE LAMPS, ELECTRIC LIGHT

In armour-finished iron, with shades of straw opal glass rough inside
J. POWELL & SONS, Whitefriars, London, E.C.



TWO-LIGHT BRACKET—OPALESCENT GLASS

W. A. S. BENSON & Co., New Bond Street, London



ELECTRIC LIGHT

Three-light dinner-table pendant, the lights concealed
in a copper bowl

W. A. S. BENSON & Co., New Bond Street, London

ARTIFICIAL HEAT AND LIGHT

and Mr. W. A. S. Benson's catalogues will help you on all points. His lamps and his fittings for artificial lights, his electric-light stoves, and many other forms of metal-work, from simple fire-guards to the well-known jacketed jugs which keep hot water hot for hours, are good in design and excellent in workmanship.

For work in wrought iron, such as fenders and fire-irons, write to Mr. Starkie Gardner, Wilcox Road, South Lambeth, London, whose work gained the Gold Medal at Paris in 1900.

As to the private artist-craftsmen (who have gathered about them a circle of patrons like that which surrounds the essayist in literature) special reference may be made here to Mr. Nelson Dawson, Swan House, Chiswick Mall, Chelsea, London, and to Mr. Alexander Fisher, Warwick Gardens, Kensington, London, W. Both are distinguished metal-workers, and their art ranges from household utilities to the finest enamels and jewellery.

Good work is done by the Home Arts and Industries Association, which has many provincial branches; and much may be learnt by applying to the Head Masters of Art Schools, whose best pupils need a practical start in life. The Central School of Arts and Crafts, Regent Street, London, turns out many clever pupils, to whom commissions from householders would be very helpful.

Of course, *The Studio* magazine is invaluable, for it is the only art paper which keeps in touch with the young artists and craftsmen to whom the future of our

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home arts belongs. *The Builder*, too, is an excellent journal, and its advertisements are of real help on all points connected with house architecture and furnishing.

Mr. J. S. Henry, 287 Old Street, London, E.C., and 1 New Burlington Street, W., has many useful Light Fittings of wood : and here are two other addresses :

Messrs. Longden and Co., Phoenix Foundry, Sheffield, grates, fenders, fire-irons, wrought-iron work, ornamental brasswork and bronzes.

Faraday and Son, 2 Berners Street, London, W., electric light fittings.

CHAPTER IX

CROCKERY AND PORCELAIN

“THESE, sir, are our failures,” said Beau Brummell’s valet to a visitor, looking at a pile of neckties. “These, sir, are *my* own failures,” the genius of English trade might say, pointing to the masses of crockery which are cast in moulds by the gross and printed by the thousands. Look at the poor, ornate commercialism, the far-sought and dear-bought and worthless patterns ; seek for some connection between all this botched craft and the household life of to-day ; and then remember that the Fictile Art, so ill-treated now, appeals to the imagination as the very first among those inventions of man wherein an effort was made to unite beauty with use, and poetry with thirst and hunger. It is the Book of Genesis in the dim history of primitive arts and crafts. Man’s earliest needs in domestic life, his first utensils, “ came from the mother earth, whose child he believed himself to be, and his ashes or his bones returned to earth enshrined in the fictile vases he created from their common clay.” Time passed into innumerable years, and legends full of vague dreams gathered about the funeral mounds where vanished races lay entombed ; but those fictile records were kept unharmed by the soil around

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them, till at last they were discovered and made known, and now they tell more of man's history than is told by any other art. Almost all we know of many a people and many a tongue is related by the potter's art in domestic wares.

If only we remembered from time to time that the household arts represent a great religion, one of loyalty to home duties and to daily toil, we should understand that we owe reverence to the great traditions which those arts have handed on to us through so many ages and sages that history can but hint at them in a groping fashion. It is not a small matter when a fine art degenerates and use and beauty are no longer found in a nation's common wares. There is no worse thing than that, for all races have progressed with their arts and fallen with them. It is only ardent minds and hands that create beautiful work; and to admire what others do admirably is to prove that we ourselves feel admirably: we are true artists in appreciation. We prove what we are by what we like and by what we do, and hence we are responsible for all the bad taste that either leers or screams at us from shop-windows. People who would rather die than drop the letter "h" in conversation buy for their homes the most vulgar trash, nor are they willing to take advice from architects and other experts. Doctors they consult, and solicitors and stockbrokers, but in art they have the self-confidence that belongs to little knowledge of familiar things.

It seems so very easy to pick out furniture for a home.

CROCKERY AND PORCELAIN :

Have you not seen from your earliest youth all the many things required, from chairs and tables to the humblest pots and pans? Why, then, should you seek professional advice? That is the argument to which our leading architects have to listen when their clients destroy good work with penurious furniture. There is but one reply: Study the shop-windows, learn what tradesmen *know* concerning the public taste, concerning the public wish to be gulled. What, for example, do you think of that dessert service, painted all over with realistic fruits of a large size? And look at the other dessert plates over there—those which are partly hidden by a soup tureen dappled with rosebuds. Over those plates huge red poppies sprawl. Who is responsible for such absurdities? Dinner plates may yet be “decorated” with painted mutton chops and cooked potatoes.

There is only one excuse for this comical bad taste. English traditions in the fictile arts and crafts are not of the highest kind. Patriotism, no doubt, is glad to be proud of the old Chelsea, Derby, Worcester, and Plymouth china; but these wares, whether good or bad, are always inferior to many Eastern varieties, and among them you will find some very queer solecisms, as when teacups are painted *inside*, as if tea had eyes and was unhappy in a cup without gay colours to admire. Yet those old English potteries have an evident charm: they represent an age when thoroughness was valued, when money was earned with time and merit, not with haste and advertisement. They have not the pure form and

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grace that Wedgwood gave to his revival of Grecian symmetry, nor have they those native English qualities which potters of Elizabethan times loved to put into their slip wares in Staffordshire, posset-bowls and big round plates, coarse, no doubt, but with a genuine feeling for decorative art, as true in its own way as the daintiest ornament to be found on humble preserve jars made by Indian peasants. Old Chelsea, Worcester, and Derby, like Sèvres and other French pottery, are nothing more than refined arts in affectation, gracious and fanciful, and sincerely insincere, like ladies of the first fashion who live in the artifice of Court life. You have but to study the English potteries at the British Museum, and at other public institutions, if you wish to note their merits and demerits. There is no large feeling for decorative colour and design such as the Persians loved, or the Chinese put into their ginger jars. There is also very little trace of that naïve enthusiasm which imparts value to the most popular forms of decorative art in Moorish plates and dishes. What can be more surprising than the timidity with which our English potters have treated their painted ornaments? Who would believe that they belonged to a race of sportsmen, colonisers, and sea-adventurers? Here, for instance, on my table is a vase about twelve inches high; it is decorated with coloured objects in high relief, and these objects are all realistic in a feeble manner. Among them is a bird's nest with eggs in it! Now what in the world has a bird's nest to do with the ornamentation of a pot? and

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why, above all, should it be done in high relief, like a swallow's nursery plastered on a wall? That a nation of athletes should not only do such feeble work, but keep it with pride generation after generation, is a comedy of errors.

You may note, also, as a national characteristic in pottery, a misuse of gold. Gold might be as common as potters' clay, so freely is it squandered on rubbish. We are reminded of book-covers with their invariable gilt lettering. It is forgotten that this general abuse of gold has not even a trade value, since everybody is used to it in cheap work as in dear. Why should gold be vulgarised? and ought it to be a decorative agent in pottery? There can be no doubt that valuable things should be exhibited in a sparing manner. If all men spoke as Shakespeare and Tennyson wrote, poetry would not be recognised as such. And there are connoisseurs who believe that gold ought not to appear at all in the fictile arts; and their arguments are summed up by Eastlake:

"The practice of gilding china, as it is at present carried out, is a most objectionable one. It may be fairly questioned whether the application of gilding at all is satisfactory, looking to the nature of the material and the conditions of its manufacture. But the fashion of gilding the edges of cups and plates, and *touching up* (as it were) with streaks of gold the relieved ornament on lids and handles, is a monstrous piece of vulgarity."

It can't be anything else, for precious things are not

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thrown away by any one who values them intelligently. Gold was introduced into pottery for three reasons: as a note of colour, as a rare substance, and also because discordant colours harmonise when separated by gold lines. The gilding on old pottery has retained its metallic sparkle, and is far better than the modern equivalent, which commonly gets dull. Yet, however "cheap" the gilding may be, it is troublesome to apply, and if manufacturers got rid of it they could give more time and care to matters of greater importance. Even the snobbery of gilt may be "done to death." Shop-windows will prove to you that simple china without gilding is almost as rare as newspapers without headlines.

Four qualities are necessary in modern fictiles:

1. Forms having grace.
2. Simple and attractive colour.
3. Wearing strength.
4. The recognition of a definite purpose for each thing.

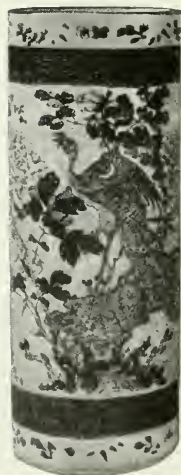
Not unfrequently all these qualities are absent, and we get pretension, an unfailing bad luck in the use of coloured patterns, and a neglect of real service. Too much is attempted, and simplicity is flouted as unmarketable. Here is a water-jug not at all bad in shape, but dappled with little leaves and flowers; and *there* is a large basin with a gold rim and the sides floriated. It is wasted labour. Plain tints and a good glaze would be more effective. Hence I note with pleasure that

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CHINESE
BLUE-AND-WHITE
PORCELAIN

MESSRS. LIBERTY & CO.,
Regent St., London





THE NEW "COLANDER" TEA-POT
(REGISTERED DESIGNS)

Outwardly this tea-pot looks to be similar to others except that just in front of the handle is the little thumb-piece which supports the saucepan-shaped colander in which the tea is placed. When the tea has been infused long enough, a single movement of the thumb raises the colander with the leaves in it above the water level, where it is held by a button. There is no hinge or other mechanism to get out of order—the whole is simplicity itself, and is more easily cleaned than an ordinary pot. It is made in copper or electroplate, and all the copper vessels are silvered inside

W. A. S. BENSON & Co., New Bond St., London

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Messrs. Heal and Son, Tottenham Court Road, London, have revived with success the old Wedgwood toilet ware, excellent in shape and with plain colours, sometimes enriched with simple ornament around the mouth of the jug and the basin's rim.

The same firm has given thought to other kinds of toilet ware, some in the manner of the brothers Adam, others from Oriental designs, such as the old blue-and-white willow pattern, and "The Aster." In these the patterns ramble *inside* the basins, and it would be a charity to save them from being drowned day after day. Still, Messrs. Heal and Son's reproductions are carried out with thoroughness, and their modern toilet wares are good, particularly the plain ones in dark blue, in Wedgwood buff, in deep green, and in teapot-brown.

To any one who desires pattern *galore*, treated with care and some distinction, Heal's good replicas of eighteenth-century work may be recommended. These reproductions are in facsimile, and carried out by arrangement with Copeland and Sons, the successors of Josiah Spode at Stoke-on-Trent. The designs range in date from 1770 to 1800, and include the "Moss Sprig" pattern (probably the best), the "Tower" and the "George III." In this ware the handles may be knobbed like bent branches, and the mouths of jugs are sometimes in curious waved lines that serve no purpose of either use or beauty. If they are meant to represent the movement of tidal water, the symbolism is out of place on a bedroom jug. As a

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real encouragement to the making of simple things in a simple way, the Board of Trade ought to offer annual prizes. Meantime, it is true that Heal's reproductions of Spode's bedroom wares are equal to those which were made between 1805 and 1830, and include well-known patterns like the "China Rose," the "Butterfly," the "Peacock," the "Bangup," and the "Gate."

Mason's stoneware is another ornate style in bedroom toilet services, and I have made notes of a few typical examples. There is the "Watteau" pattern in blue and white, far more complicated than Watteau would have been under any influence of wine. "Blue Watteau," this multiform design is called, and among the incidents depicted is a girl on a swing with a young man behind her, so that even water-jugs set up in rivalry with picture galleries.

Messrs. Heal and Son have started a revival of the old English silver lustre ware, with its untarnishable brilliance. Even the commonest forms of lustre—those in which the reducing agent is sulphur, as in the old Swansea examples—have beauty, though their iridescent shimmer is feeble in comparison with the playful sparkle and the dancing-hued magic of ancient lustres, whether Persian or Hispano-Moresque. In Roman glass, dug up from buried villas, there are glorious rainbow tints, but the prismatic play of colours, interflashing rather than interblending, has not the assured art that fine lustred ware ought to have, as in good examples by Mr. William de Morgan.

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But, however favourable the methods may be, the genius of lustred ware is a freakish lady with whims acquired at the Court of Dame Fortune. Trifles put her out of friends with the most obsequious potter; and there appear to be chemicals in the air of English towns that make her ill when damp coal-smoke thickens into mist and fog. It is never possible to know what her mood will be in each of several pots fired in the same kiln. She enslaves her courtiers by humbling them with disappointments, adding a real success from time to time, partly to show that she does exist and partly to cheer them on into new failures. For this reason lustre ware cannot be inexpensive to any one. I note, for instance, that toilet wares of silver lustre cost twenty-five shillings the set, while a basin and jug in plain cream Wedgwood are only seven-and-sixpence.

In the De Morgan process the work was carried on as follows. The metallic oxides—silver and copper—were mixed with lampblack and gum, so as to make a painting mixture which could be seen on the pots and tiles when the designs were brushed-in over a glaze friendly to lustres. Some glazes are more susceptible than others; and there are Eastern glazes which do not respond to the lustre process. A tin glaze gives happy results when her ladyship, the Genius of Lustre, happens to be in a good temper. Over that firm surface the metal oxides are painted; then the wares are placed in a gas-heated kiln, and the potter looks from time to time through a hole covered by a sliding plate. At a

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given moment in the firing—which his practised eye knows—he lights some slips of wood, opens a small door, and puts the burning wood inside the kiln, closing the door at once, so that the carbon in the smoke may find its way all over the pots, combining with the oxides and reducing them to a metal deposit fixed on the glaze. That deposit is lustre.

For the rest, Mr. de Morgan is among the English potters to whom we owe lasting debts of gratitude. Like Wedgwood and like Minton, he tried to make the public understand that merely trade ideals cannot reign supreme in any of the household arts without doing great harm to the worth of useful things. This fact is one which English people are very slow to grasp; they prefer to be spendthrifts. It is for this reason that good forms of English pottery become things to be collected. They represent thoroughness at a time when trash is popular.

In so far as pottery is concerned, the only hopeful sign is the reproduction of old wares from original designs still in the keeping of famous houses, like the makers of Wedgwood, Spode, Copeland, and Mason's ironstone wares. I should like to draw special attention to Maple and Co's replicas of old Crown Derby, and to Heal's tea services in Wedgwood buff and in cream white. A service of Wedgwood Buff, forty pieces, costs twenty-one shillings; in white Wedgwood, fifteen shillings; and in Wedgwood's Queen's Ware, four guineas. Let us welcome these popular and thorough

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things. Useful catalogues may be got from Messrs. Liberty, Regent Street, and from Mortlock's, 466 Oxford Street, and 31 Orchard Street, London.

Is it permissible for a man to offer hints to housewives? If so, here is a little handful :

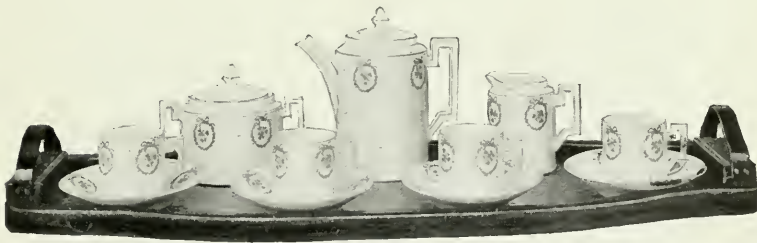
1. When buying tea services, coffee services, and jugs to hold hot liquids, be sure to ask whether they are well annealed ; that is, whether they have passed in the right manner through that process which renders them less fragile, less brittle, a process performed by allowing them to cool very gradually from a high heat. When this quite necessary process has been carried out in a rapid, careless manner, the annealing is bad, and the cups or the glasses soon crack under the influence of hot liquids. The trouble is that many shopkeepers know nothing about the wares they sell, being merely distributors. If you spoke to them about annealing they might imagine that you talked Japanese in honour of our alliance with that people. You can never tell what a shopkeeper thinks if you speak to him in technical terms. For this reason, among others, housewives should make a rule never to buy crockery unless the distributor can show a printed guarantee from the manufacturers. The guarantee should say that the wares are fit for their purpose, being carefully annealed. Some manufacturers will object to this and refer to the carelessness of servants. "Why should *we* be responsible?" they will ask. "Housemaids jumble together the dirty glasses and teacups, place them in the sink, turn on the hot-water tap, and

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then do their 'washing-up'—always in a frantic hurry. The water may be boiling, and it falls heavily in a great stream." This custom of the pantry is a thing behind which even the most careless manufacturer may hide himself from responsibility ; and hence we should defend our own interests by asking *all* manufacturers to give a guarantee that the annealing has been done with care. To that extent they must be responsible to the purchasing public ; and housewives can test the guarantee either by washing the teacups daily for a fortnight or by watching the housemaid do that work. It is always worth while to take pains. For example, if you buy a revolver you know that it has been tested, that it is as safe for use as the element of human fallibility will allow it to be. A tea service may cost as much as a revolver, sometimes more, yet you buy it without a guarantee, just because the annealing process affects your pocket only, while a badly-made revolver is dangerous to your life. Gunpowder encourages common sense, while housekeeping does not (as a rule) : it looks at thrift from a distance.

2. Those who are fond of patterned work on all things, from cups and saucers to the silver blades of fruit knives, should remember that patterns, whether ill-placed or well-placed, represent work, and that work must be paid for. Sailors learn that lesson when they have themselves tattooed. Here are two good toilet sets, both in Wedgwood's style. One is enriched with a design by Flaxman and costs eighteen shillings and six-

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COFFEE SETS

By LIBERTY & Co., London

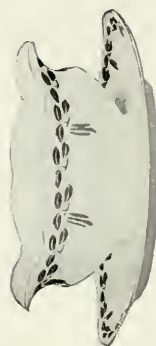
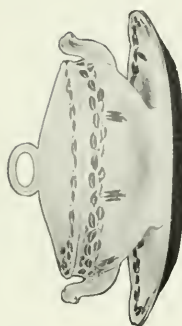
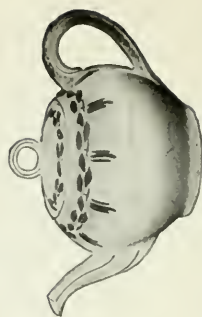
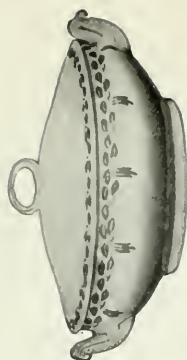
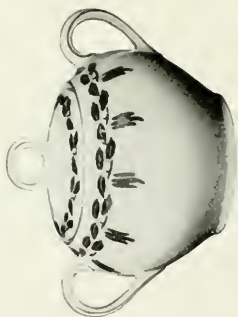
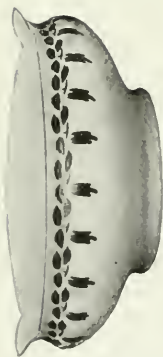


TABLE WARE :
THE "CATRIN" DESIGN IN
SOFT SHADES OF GREEN

LIBERTY & Co., London



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pence ; the other, cream-white and plain, costs seven-and-sixpence. I choose good examples to illustrate a simple fact—*i.e.*, that pattern in decorative art should raise the cost price of useful things. To that extent it is a luxury, not a necessity ; and hence, when an article is inexpensive, it is better for us to go without pattern, and to look for qualities which do *not* raise the cost of production. Beautiful shapes in pottery are not more expensive to make than ugly forms, particularly when moulds are used.

3. Do not buy from small distributors in country places, but write to well-known firms that issue good catalogues.

4. Remember that a porcelain painter, like any other decorative artist, has no business to vie with painters of easel pictures. His flowers ought not to be naturalistic, with shaded leaves and such like, but just sufficiently suggestive of nature to be graceful, as in Persian and Rhodian wares. Realistic landscapes, portraits of pretty women, cottage scenes, and Cupid at play in trellised gardens, these subjects, and many others, are all out of place on china and porcelain. Figure-subjects were, no doubt, painted on different kinds of old Italian pottery ; but if you study the work you will find that is a conventional decoration which does not imitate the methods and the perspective necessary in pictures. There is much to be learnt on these matters from the humblest Eastern wares, like those produced by peasant craftsmen of Bengal and Algeria.

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5. For example, they are never *too neat* in the execution of their patterns, nor are they pretty-pretty in their choice of tints. Their brushwork is free and decorative, with all the charm of variety given by a sensitive touch which has not become mechanical. There is too often in our English work an ignoble finish, a precision of line which is mathematical, and therefore without nerve and emotion.

6. Remember, too, that good colour has *quality*, is difficult—is even impossible—to describe by name, so gradated is it even in flat tints, so broken up as to be many-hued within a beautiful local colour. The same tint may be called blue when opposed to green, and green when opposed to blue, and so forth with other colours.

7. Do not forget that pinks, mauves, magentas, and other hues of the same kind, though found in English potteries, are bad; no real artist would accept them. They are in painting what sentimentalities are known to be in literature—weak, ignoble, and unwholesome.

8. Study the glaze on potteries, and get eye-knowledge of the good and of the bad. Some glazes are like moist barley-sugar; they never look dry; they seem to be a trap for flies, and we wonder that flies move over them without being caught.

9. Don't forget to look with care at the handles of vegetable dishes, soup tureens, cups, water-jugs, &c. &c. They are excellent tests of good workmanship and bad. Of course, their forms should be in every respect graceful ones, and this they cannot be if they suggest incon-

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gruous ideas. British manufacturers, during the last half-century, in their child-like hunt after novelty, have hit upon many queer handles, ranging from gilt acorns to sea-shells, and from twisted stalks to mulberries. Would it break our hearts if they used simple rings or knobs carefully modelled?

10. Admire at a long, long distance any flower-vase representing a human hand or a cow's horn, or a naked baby with a hole in its poor little head. On my table I have another kind of flower-vase, six inches high, with a tortuous glass bulb growing uneasily from the centre of a glass artichoke. It must be an artichoke, I think, for there are in all three rows of oval scales, and each of the twenty scales has a fleshy-looking base. But it would need an encyclopædia to record the horrible things which the British public has bought in its hurried retreats from good taste.

11. Eastlake, thirty-six years ago, wrote in praise of the cheap and useful red "delf" ware, made originally by Wedgwood, I believe, but adopted by other leading firms. "It is to be had in all shades of colour, from a pale ochreous hue to a deep Indian red. Almost all these tints are very beautiful in themselves, but their effect is sometimes marred by the use of enamelled colour applied in too violent a contrast. The unglazed ware is used for water-bottles, butter-coolers, &c., its porous nature being admirably adopted to such purposes . . . The most ordinary form of delf water-bottle is bulbous at its lower end, with a narrow neck, the upper

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part of which, being most exposed to the touch, is very properly glazed. Both the neck and the body of the jug are frequently decorated with enamelled colour arranged in geometrical patterns of a Greek or mediæval character. Some of the water-bottles take the form of small antique vases, and these are, for the most part, made of clay. Very beautiful examples of this class, in orange porous delf, may now (A.D. 1872) be bought for a few shillings apiece. The same material is frequently used for teapots, hot-water jugs, &c., the ware, either red or stone colour, being in these cases covered internally with a glaze."

The crockery, thus described by Eastlake, and often associated with the name of Copeland, is to be bought to-day; it is homely and delightful.

12. When you look at patterns on such things as a toilet service, do not forget the absurdities which have had a vogue in England, as when bulrushes, swans, seaweed, ivy, and other natural objects, like mauve and pink ribbons twisted into loops, were thought admirable on bedroom jugs and basins. It is anything but easy now to find good patterns, that is, reasonable patterns, having a decorative connection with the article upon which they are put. No designs are better for toilet wares than simple borders in monochrome, such as the Greek fret pattern—the Greek key, as it is usually called—and other classic formulas, like the guilloche or wave pattern. When a great artist like Flaxman turns vine leaves and grapes into an ornament for jugs and

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basins, we have to pardon him, for he is incongruous in a skilful way ; still, it is well to remember that vines are not more in place on a bedroom jug, than they would be on the note-paper of a temperance society.

13. If you wish to know how human figures may be painted—with decorative success and charm—on pottery, study the Greek ceramic arts, where you will find exquisite drawing unaccompanied by realism. There is no shading, no pictorial effect. Drapery folds, and the action of limbs, are expressed by lines ; and the human figure is formalised in flat colour, red on a black ground, or *vice versa*, and sometimes white on a black ground. Copeland did some excellent work on these lines years ago, just as Minton, with the help of W. S. Coleman, realised much of the true spirit of old Italian majolica.

14. British housewives would learn many pleasant lessons at South Kensington and at the British Museum. It is only by looking at the best work that the principles of decorative art can be understood in a practical manner.

15. Messrs. Doulton and Co. will long be remembered for their grey and buff stoneware, good in colour and excellent in quality of material.

16. It is difficult to give advice on the question of vases for ornamentation only. Last autumn, at Olympia, a great many examples of British ceramic art where exhibited, and did you not remark their bad colour and their ornate triviality ? Was there anything so good as the old Gres-de-Flandres ? Do you think

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that any prehistoric man would have liked to be buried with vases so troubled with uneasy dreams? Yet there is hope. Messrs. Morris and Co. have usually in stock some really fine modern replicas of the old Rhodian ware, charmingly shaped, beautiful in colour, and recalling a time when potters were great artists. The same firm has also some good examples of Pilkington lustre ware, a very highly finished product with a quiet distinction of its own, though rather weak in decorative tone and accent. Its accuracy of workmanship is too marked. But yet, after all, its qualities are good of their kind and useful.

Messrs. Liberty and Co. issue an interesting catalogue on bric-a-brac, and particular reference may be made to the blue and white porcelain, the dinner services, tea-sets, and breakfast-sets.

Then there is a really good English product, the Martin Ware, to be bought from the potters at Brownlow Street, Holborn, London. The grotesque figures in this ware do not appeal to everybody; but there are some beautiful and unique vases, and these we should be proud to collect. Perhaps their average price may be put at 25s.

Again, it is always worth while to remember the Whitefriars Glass Works, Tudor Street, London, E.C., where many beautiful kinds of decorative work are carried on, and where traditions in excellent craftsmanship go on improving after an unbroken history of rather more than two hundred years.

CHAPTER X

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

HOUSEHOLD glass may be studied from two points of view, the one artistic, the other politically social and historical. Sometimes the art blends quite amicably with the politics, but a party spirit in public affairs, whether engraved on glass or printed on paper, would betray itself if it were often a friendly craftsman. It lives to fight, and, adding the letter "s" to decoration, it makes for honours and titles. Party aims may seem to be well placed on a fragile substance like glass or like modern paper, but they may do a great deal of harm in their short life, being ever at fisticuffs with peace.

Politics on glass were very much in vogue during the eighteenth century, when tumblers and other drinking glasses made known the opinions of the day concerning William III., and the outcast Stuarts, and the dreary House of Hanover. At first sight it may seem that Jacobite glasses and the Stuart character were equally unstable, and likely to endure about the same period of time ; but the Pretenders vanished in a bad reputation, while scores of the old Jacobite glasses are still extant.

Each glass has engraved upon it an emblem of that long-lost movement, which gave origin to Jacobite

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clubs and societies in all parts of the country. The emblems are various, ranging from portraits of the Pretenders to national badges, a rose, a thistle, and an oak-loaf, associated with other familiar tokens, such as the round sun and the mottoes "Redeat" and "Fiat." One notes, too, that these Jacobite glasses were common till the end of the eighteenth century, as if George III. had little hold on popular sympathies. The feeling towards the Stuarts may have been either active and political or passive and sentimental, but its records on late Georgian glass are singular, because an official patriotism showed itself on *wooden* furniture between the years 1700 and 1730. With the Georges, so far as wooden furniture is concerned, there came a revulsion from all things foreign save the royal whims from Hanover. To copy a foreign mode or to show a delight in foreign styles was to parade a liking for other things over the water than mere questions of household taste, and to be thought a Jacobite. So, for almost the first time in our history, a national style in furniture began to be preferred beyond all others, at least in outward show. But chairs and tables are compromising evidence hard to make away with, while drinking glasses occupy little space, are easy to hide and easy to break; hence, perhaps, their late popularity as mementoes of Jacobite sympathies.

It is odd to connect glasses with illustrated journalism, profusely engraved with political mottoes, badges, portraits, and libels. One famous tumbler, engraved



CUT AND ENGRAVED DECANTER IN
WHITEFRIARS GLASS

Copied from the Roman original in the Cologne Museum
with Hand-worked, Silver-mounted Cork

JAMES POWELL & SONS, London, E.C.



WHITEFRIARS GLASS
JAMES POWELL & SONS, Whitefriars, London

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

with a kit-kat portrait, is labelled Admiral Keppel, and a more hideous caricature could not well be imagined. It is like a Hindoo idol transfigured by the pains of chronic sea-sickness. Other national heroes were honoured on ale-glasses, Howe, Duncan, St. Vincent, Nelson, Wellington ; and now and again a glass enables us to drink success to a privateer, long dead and gone, who sailed for his last voyage into unknown seas, without letters of marque, and unequipped by Bristol merchants.

However valuable these glasses may be historically, they have nothing to do with household art, because glass needs no applied ornament, no decoration, whether cut or engraved. Its beauty is its own translucent charm. To destroy that is to ruin the glass. With a needle you might prick a beautiful design on each petal of a rose, but you would not improve the rose, nor would your skill of hand do the least credit to your taste. It is even so with glass. Exquisite designs may be engraved upon it, but, like thick veils over the faces of lovely women, they tease the eye ; and the beauty which they hide from view is worth admiring.

The limpid qualities of glass are diamond-like in brilliance, yet we never connect them with the vulgarity that diamonds often suggest to educated onlookers ; and hence, no doubt, they ought to be kept pure, unblemished. Cut a diamond into as many facets as you like, but let your glass be uncut, unengraved, and have such graceful forms as a craftsman may shape with his

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breath, and with his skill in making use of centrifugal force.

The first essential of good table glass enables us to see at once that it was made from a fluid material cooled in a careful manner. This limpidity was valued till the end of the seventeenth century, when the wheel came into play, and with it a custom of engraving glasses. The early efforts were not bad, but when after a little practice the engraver's hand became delicate in touch, many intricate designs were attempted, till at last the waterlike transparency of table glass was veiled by patterns.

Skill of hand has often been accompanied by a decline of taste; and with glass the decline was rapid and complete. The material was turned out in blocks, deeply cut and heavy; decanters were like huge clubs notched and indented, so that a tipsy man was quite proud if he could lift them without spilling the wine. Shopmen delighted in their bulk. "Feel this decanter, madam! feel its weight; all solid good glass; allow *me* to lift it, madam, it is much too heavy for you to move without effort." Burglars were afraid of such decanters, and even butlers hated them, although they strengthened the wrist like dumb-bells and prize fighting.

The belief that glass was to be valued by weight, like gold, lived on to the reign of Queen Victoria, when a gradual improvement began to bring into fashion some beautiful forms in delicate films of glass. The

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

bad custom of engraving the surface with patterns was retained, and has been handed on to our time in all popular work. Sprays of maiden-hair fern are among the stereotyped decorations, probably because they have no connection at all with walnuts and wine.

On my table are two examples of modern glass-work, both inimitably bad, so that I cannot hope to do them justice in a description. One is a lamp globe. The general shape is that of a thistle flower, but a tradesman has varied it in a remarkable manner, for the lower part is ridged and valleyed like a melon, while the upper part is crinkled and pleated like stiff calico. This appears to be enough for one wild hunt after novelty. But the tradesman was a daring fellow, and ordered the melon to be engraved all over with leaves and flowers : even this left some nooks and corners of pure glass, to be filled in with dots.

The next specimen is a flower vase. It stands erect on six petals ; then comes a bulb like the root of a crocus, and then a trumpet-shaped funnel with a waved brim of much heavier glass. What the brim means I do not know, but it resembles sea-foam. It is in pure glass, while the other parts are tinted red.

The use of colour in household glass has provoked many arguments. There are times when it is justified, for the craft of the glass-blower charms now and then with effects like those of enamel. In addition to employing a material of one colour, "pot metal" of different tints can be laid one over the other ; and

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

when the outer films are cut through by the wheel, we have a pattern in one hue on a different-tinted ground. Only, as plain glass, pure and transparent, has a rare beauty, there is danger in polychrome experiments.

One may be sure, indeed, that table glass never needs any added colour save those which are given to it by wines and by beer and cider. You must have noticed many times the large, gleaming bottles in the window of a chemist's shop. They are filled with coloured water, blue, green, orange, ruby red; and when the sun plays on and through their surface, or artificial light burns behind them, there is a magic of colour, many-hued and flashing, that stained glass cannot produce. Why, then, should we buy tinted wine-glasses and tumblers, as if wines and other drinks were not in themselves beautiful colouring agents?

It is a question worth a frank reply. About forty years ago, when Dr. Salviati began to improve modern table glass, with the help of advice from Mr. A. H. Layard, the British market was a real hindrance to progress. The large depôt in St. James's Street had a variety of the best work, but a demand for the worst soon got troublesome, the public believing that many colours were as admirable in table-glass as in bouquets of greenhouse flowers. Goblets were eagerly bought if their bowls, stems and feet were all of different hues. It was a great mistake. In good examples the body of the glass was plain, and relieved by a single colour in the ornamental portions.



RIBBED AND DENTED WINE GLASSES



CUT AND ENGRAVED WINE GLASSES

JAMES POWELL & SONS, Whitefriars, London, E.C.



RIBBED WINE GLASSES

JAMES POWELL & SONS, Whitefriars, London, E.C.

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

To understand how vicious our modern taste has become in its liking for glass-work, we have only to note the difference between contemporary specimens of Venetian craft and those which belong to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Venetian glass made to-day is commonly a toy, ornate, fragile, and meretricious. It implores you to like its far-sought effects of colour, its complicated mechanism, its brittle-looking shapes, which are not in accord with refined taste. Cook's tourists appear to be fascinated by these Venetian gewgaws, perhaps because they travel much in a hurry and think little and in set phrases.

Many persons have the convictions of a phonograph. Having heard that Venetian glass should be admired, they give their minds freely to the business of admiration, without worrying themselves about the distinction between ancient and modern craftsmanship. "Ancient table glass was generally blown, the natural ductility of the material being such that while in a state of partial fusion it could be stamped, twisted, and fashioned into shapes which varied with the individual taste and skill of the workman. The consequence was that in Venice, during the fifteenth and two following centuries, this branch of art-industry rose to a pitch of excellence which obtained for it a world-wide reputation. It would be impossible to enumerate here all the peculiar varieties of design included in this ingenious and beautiful art. Under the general head of 'filigree glass,' the combinations of form and colour (including that of the well-

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known *latticinio*) were countless. Then there were the *millefiori*, in which slices of rod-glass appeared imbedded in a colourless or differently-coloured ground of the same material ; the *schmelze*, or mock agate ; the *avventurino*, with its rich golden lustre, which has been basely imitated in modern toilet-trinkets, the ‘ crackle ’ and ‘ opal ’ glass in which light is refracted with exquisite effect, and many other kinds which were further enriched by the distinct processes of enamelling and engraving. Up to this time the early traditions of the art had been preserved, or perhaps revived from the time of the Romans, when glass was blown in moulds, stamped, turned on a wheel and engraved rudely enough sometimes, but often with great artistic care. The celebrated Portland vase, for instance, was probably made of two layers of glass, of which the upper surface was cut away in cameo-fashion, to form a background for the bas-relief with which it is decorated. But work of so laborious and costly a character as this must, of course, be regarded as exceptional. The ordinary table glass made in Venice and exported to every country in Europe during the early part of the Renaissance was for the most part blown only, and depended for its form on the taste and manipulation of artisans, whose fancy was as fertile as their fingers were apt, and who required no school of design to teach them the shape of a flask or beaker.”*

* “ Household Taste.” By Charles L. Eastlake, F.R.I.B.A., Architect. 1872. Pages 245, 246.

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

It is clear from this that the glassworker's methods, both good and bad, are at least as old as the Romans. Cutting, engraving, the use of colour, and glass blown into moulds, these are ancient traditions which represent for us the popular taste of a great many ages and nations. Criticism may make them less popular here and there, and perhaps limit their excessive abuse; more than that we cannot expect. Manufacturers can tempt buyers to choose better things, but (as the late Gleeson White used to say) they have no power to coerce the public, nor do they advance the cause of good taste by refusing to make objects which are just outside the margin of good taste, without being quite in the larger domain of one hopelessly bad. Popular arts must compromise, following an example set by members of Parliament; and we are in luck if we manage to get a good second-best.

This point granted, several questions present themselves in a new light and must be answered at least tentatively. To what extent may colour be used in table glass? And to what extent are cutting and engraving justified?

The latter is the easier to answer, because applied decoration is never a true ornament on glass; and hence a compromise ought to limit the use of it in the best way possible. That this may be done, we must keep in mind the following points:

1. As table glass should depend for its colour on the liquids which are put into decanters, tumblers, and

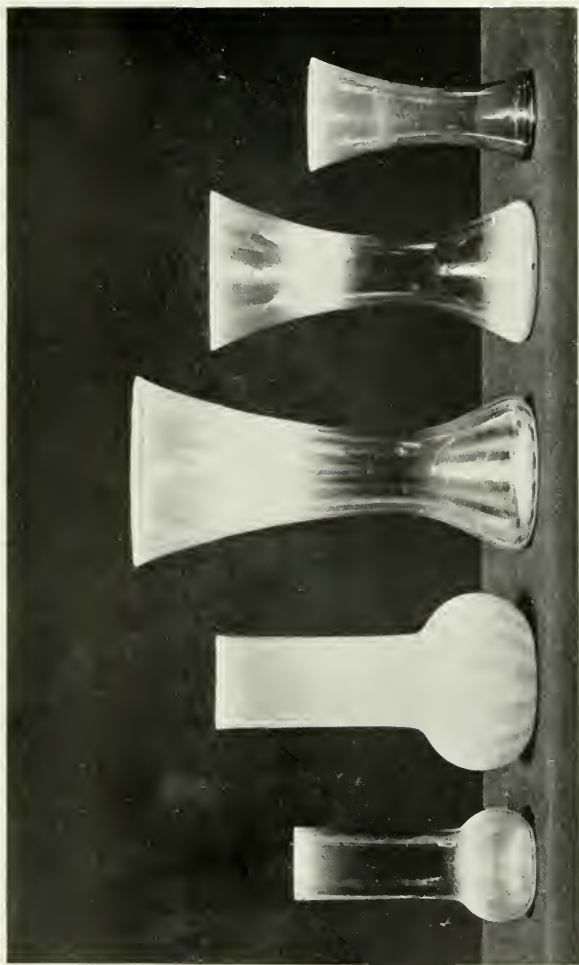
HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

wine glasses, the cutting and engraving must be of a kind which does not render glass opaque, nor attract more attention than the material which they are meant to adorn.

2. As this surface treatment is a concession to the popular taste, not an essential of art, decanters must not be cut all over, nor glasses notched into a thousand facets and more. A faceted decoration, if used very sparingly, is the best, and for two reasons. It is non-realistic, and there is no reason to make it deep and coarse, as in crystal glass of the eighteenth century, where it dulls or hides the gleaming colour of wines and of ales and ciders. In wine glasses the facets look best when they are put in a narrow pattern above the stem; while in decanters they may form central bands or central medallions, with perhaps a narrow string or two around the necks. On this point, though, I speak with reluctance, believing that all decanters of cut glass are mistakes. Ruskin was thinking of them, we may be sure, when he asked us to be ashamed of popular table glass.

3. Then, as regards engraved designs, like the maiden-hair fern, and cornflowers, and lotus lilies, harebells, and such like, they come within those realistic patterns which we have discussed in earlier chapters of this book, so they may be put aside as undecorative and wrong.

4. Fluted glass may be very beautiful: and note how the flutes are made. A craftsman blows a lump of pot metal into a corrugated cylinder, and the fluting thus



STRAW OPAL VASES
JAMES POWELL & SONS, Whitefriars, London, E.C.



WHITEFRIARS CUT GLASS SERVICES

JAMES POWELL & SONS, London, E.C.

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

obtained lasts for ever, no matter how the glass is treated. Blow it into a globe, twist it into a stem, make it into a dish, and the flutes remain, however delicate and wavelike they may be.

Among the illustrations to this chapter, I am giving some examples of cut and engraving glasses and decanters by the best craftsmen in Europe, Harry Powell and his assistants, of the Whitefriars Glass Works, Tudor Street, London, E.C. Each specimen is a compromise that denotes care and thought and skill: it is better by far than the work of other manufacturers. The material is beautiful, the shapes are good, and the ornament has variety.

Colour comes next. To what extent may colour be used in domestic glass? It is justified in well-made flower vases; but not in the bowls of wine-glasses, for reasons already given. On the other hand, the Venetians have used colour, not unattractively, in the stems of drinking-glasses, the principal tints being olive, amber, ruby, bottle-green, and sea-blue, all employed as *avven-turino* decoration. Some of the best Venetian tumblers are quite plain, while others have a delicate edging of colour around the brim. Some beakers are laced about with very slender threads of coloured glass, and, to give the hand a firmer hold, their lower ends have bosses tinted with the same colour. You will remember also, another Venetian style, the famous opal glass, through which light is transmitted in iridescent hues, rich and lovely. Messrs. Powell have opal glasses of their own

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

not inferior to the Venetian in quality of material, and often better in design.

The Whitefriars glass may be divided into lead-glass and soda-lime glass, the first a compound of sand, oxide of lead, and potash, while the second is made of sand, oxide of lime, and soda. Lead-glass, again, is a heavy material, and exceedingly dear, while the other kind is less expensive and lighter. The one is cold and colourless, not unlike the crystal glass of the eighteenth century, which owed its weight and its peculiar brightness to large quantities of minium (*i.e.*, red lead). Soda-lime glass, on the other hand, has a soft warm surface of its own and a colour of its own, a limpid clarity, a singular translucent texture, through which light seems to pass reluctantly, melting rather than flashing. This beautiful material wants no added ornament of any kind whatever. It is lead-glass, with its cold, steely brilliance, that devotees of compromise should think about in relation to cutting and engraving.

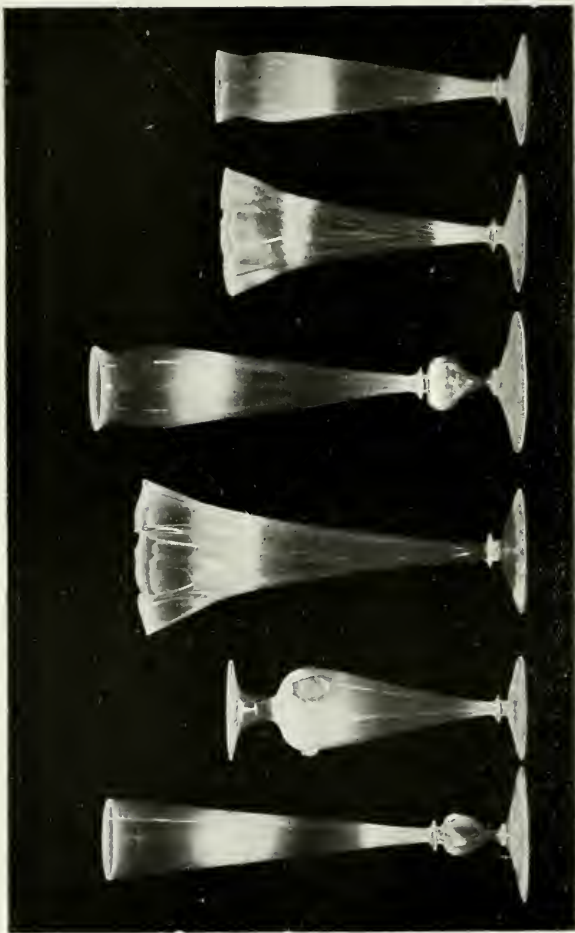
One other point. The Whitefriars table glasses and decanters are not "pressed" or "moulded," but made entirely by hand, and with tools wellnigh as primitive as those which were used by Egyptian glass-blowers under the Pharaohs. Every bit of work is an example of blown glass, of pure craftsmanship; and Mr. Powell is willing at all times to exhibit to his customers the many processes and the factory life. You will see the rough "metal" stored in great bins and resembling a red-tinted dust; the big crucibles of Stourbridge clay,

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RIBBED DECANTERS AND JUGS IN WHITEFRIARS GLASS

JAMES POWELL & SONS, London, E.C.



STRAW OPAL VASES

JAMES POWELL & SONS, Whitefriars, London

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

weighing about half a ton ; the great furnaces that burn night and day for years, and that look infernal ; the glass-blowers at work, the annealing kilns, the cutting shops and the large show-rooms. Everything is full of interest—picturesque and fascinating.

“In the glass house,” wrote the late Gleeson White, “is a huge central furnace, circular in shape, rising to the roof, with open doors all round. Peeping in there you see a white-hot crucible with its open mouth facing the door. A worker dips his rod into the molten metal, withdraws it, blows the lump at the end to a globe. Then he takes the rod in his left hand and rotates it rapidly on its axis as he rolls it backwards and forwards on a metal rail at his side, while with his right hand he deftly inserts a piece of wire into the centre of the globe, and opens it to a bowl shape. By this time the loss of heat requires the glass to be put back into the mouth of the furnace. The rod with an open bowl on its end, still rotated by hand, is plunged boldly in, and withdrawn to be further opened out and manipulated—possibly to form a trumpet-shaped vase or one not unlike the flower of a convolvulus. Meanwhile, another maker has, perhaps, been fashioning the leg and foot of the vase in like fashion. This he brings forward, holding it fixed to a rod like the bowl. The bowl is then snapped off and stuck on the foot. Now the rod, bearing a large and costly goblet or vase at its end, is again plunged into the furnace and coaxed once more to the shape, replunged, stroked, and coerced by various

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tools until it is finished. Then with a sharp blow it is detached from the rod, and carried with a pair of tongs to the mouth of one of the cooling ovens, 'lears,' as they are called. Here trays containing finished pieces move gradually from intense heat by the doors right to the back of the oven, and out into the cold air of distant passages, whence they are taken off to other workshops to be engraved, or otherwise worked upon. Some pieces require from twenty-four to forty-eight hours for their slow journey through the dozen yards or so of the lear. On this annealing process depends the very life of the glass, and despite all care, a few pieces are destroyed in every batch owing to unequal contraction in heating."*

Even this good description is inadequate; it is almost impossible to describe any technical process which is intricate. The words flow on into such scattered sentences that readers cannot piece them together without effort, and are reminded of those word-pictures in which some novelists detail a portrait, giving line after line to every feature, and sometimes a whole page to a smile. Still, however scattered a description may be, the mind retains a general impression, vague, perhaps, but yet of value in technical methods, if only because we learn from it that much time enters into all good work. We should hear less about cheap things, and more about thorough worth,

* Gleeson White in *The Art Journal*. See Part ix. of the Jubilee Series published in 1899.

HOUSEHOLD GLASS

if the public were taught in our free schools how to understand the main facts in the processes of manufacture. At the present time, owing to a demand for excessive regularity, accompanied by excessive lightness and thinness, many simple forms of table glass are blown into moulds. Now this process of moulding requires comparatively little skill, and is therefore inimical to the best methods and craftsmanship. Indeed, if the fashion for so-called "aerial" glass be long continued, the glass-blower's exquisite art will disappear.

CHAPTER XI

FURNITURE, BY M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT

MR. BAILLIE SCOTT is an architect, and his work is familiar to all students of modern art. It is work with a character of its own, a playful individuality, and yet, like the style of the late William Morris, it belongs to our mediæval traditions, reminding us of those times when the romance element of design was strong in the household arts. This being so, let us try to understand the spirit of those far-off days.

“From records, and what remains to us,” writes Mr. W. R. Lethaby, “we know that the room, the hangings, and the furniture were patterned all over with scattered flowers and inscriptions—violets and the words ‘*bonne pensée*’; or vases of lilies and ‘pax,’ angels and incense pots, ciphers and initials, badges and devices, or whatever there be of suggestion and mystery. The panelling and furniture were ‘green like a curtain,’ as the old accounts have it; or vermillion and white, like some painted chairs at Knole; or even decorated with paintings and gilt gesso patterns like the Norfolk screens. Fancy a bed with the underside of the canopy having an Annunciation or a spreading trellis of roses, and

FURNITURE, BY M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT

the chamber carved like one in thirteenth-century romance :

‘ N’a el monde beste n’oïsel

Qui n’i soit ovré à cisel.’

If we would know how far we are from the soul of art, we have but to remember that all this, the romance element in design, the joy in life, nature, and colour, which in one past development we call Gothic, and which is ever the well of beauty undefiled, is not now so much impossible of attainment as entirely out of range with our spirit and life, a felt anachronism and affectation.”

That is true no doubt. But William Morris renewed for us some part of the mediæval genius and turned it into the best textile fabrics which our age has produced ; and Mr. Baillie Scott, working both as architect and as decorative artist, has, in turn, studied the Gothic styles, borrowing hints, adapting ideas, and forming—as all men must form—a new style having an old flavour. It is to him and to William Morris that we should go if we wish to use the most difficult form of household art—namely, the patterned.

Mr. Scott has written about the work he loves, not in articles only, but in a book—“ Houses and Gardens ”—which you ought to read ; it is published by Messrs. Newnes, Limited.

Furniture cannot be considered apart from the house to which it belongs, and Mr. Scott not only remembers this fact but carries it into his designs, furnishing rooms

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

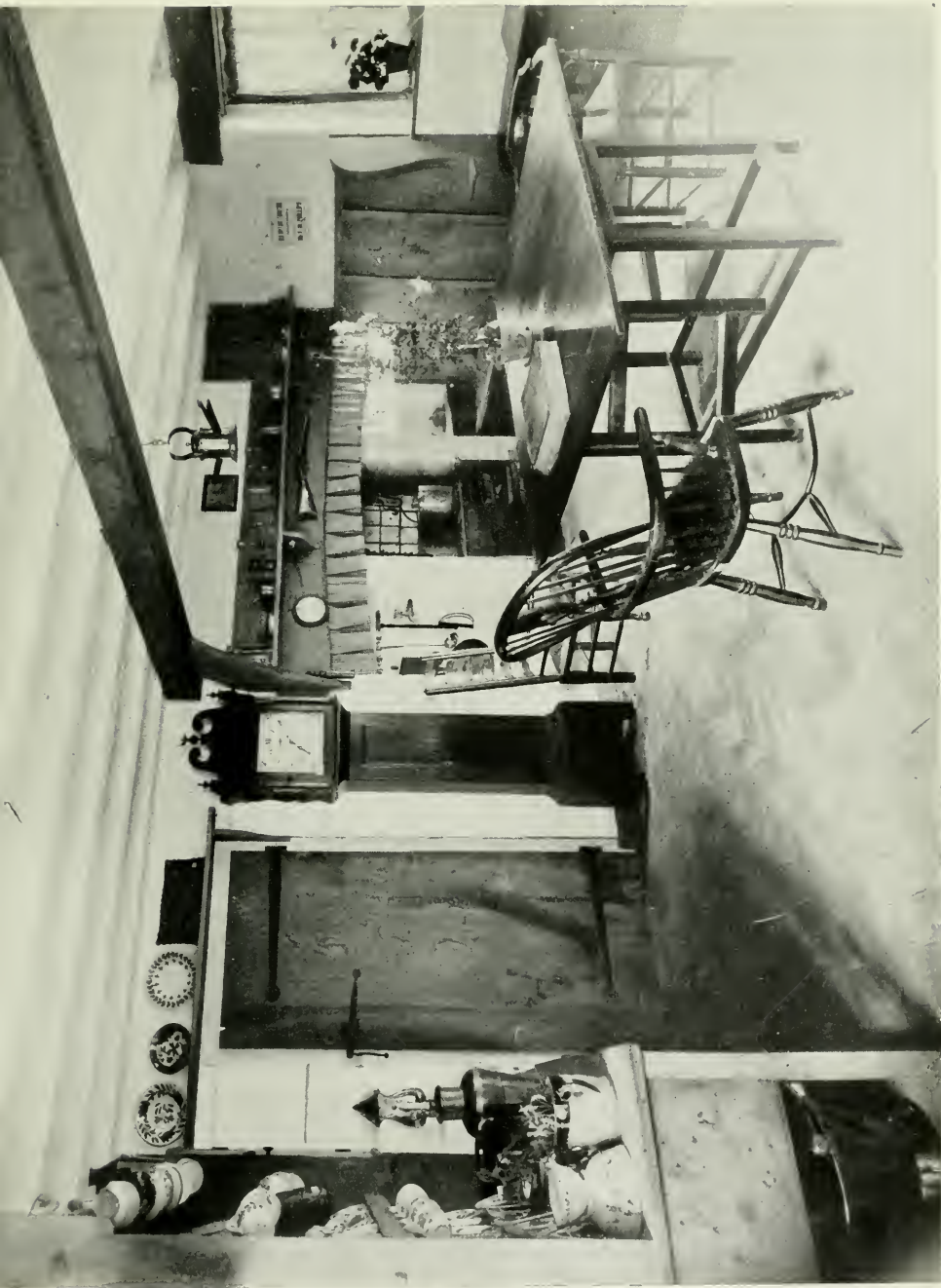
with such fitments as are suggested by his plans, so that only a few *meubles* are required to complete the scheme.

It is an excellent method of work, because fitments do not occupy the large amount of air space which has to be given to wardrobes, chests of drawers, bookcases, and such like. Modern bedrooms ought to be furnished mainly by fitments, and other conveniences might be made in all dining-rooms, where sideboards could be built structurally in the walls, as some were during the fifteenth century.

But architects are not free agents; their duty is to please their clients, and that is not a simple thing to do with success, because laymen have come to believe that house furnishing and house building are two arts, whereas they ought to be one. Owing to this erroneous belief, there is one trouble that poisons the life of most architects. Good houses are built, and then their owners "finish" them with a vengeance, putting the queerest assortment of furniture into the rooms. And it is not discreet either to protest or to offer advice. Indeed, advice may be resented hotly: it is seldom followed—unless it happens to agree with a client's preconceived ideas, which does not occur very often.

Happily there are some architects whose names are connected with the other arts of design, and to them we owe the most interesting homes which are built to-day. Their styles are various, and you may take your choice,

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THE KITCHEN AT ELMWOOD COTTAGE

M. H. BALLIE SCOTT, Architect, BEDFORD

Reproduced by permission from Mr. SCOTT'S book on "Houses and Gardens" (GEORGE NEWNES, LTD.)



THE HALL IN A COUNTRY HOUSE

M. H. BAILEY SCOTT, Bedford

Reproduced by permission from *Mr. Scott's book on "Flowers and Gardens"* (George Newnes, Ltd.)

FURNITURE, BY M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT

comparing Mr. Scott's with Mr. Lorimer's, Mr. Voysey's with Mr. Walter Cave's, or Mr. Dawber's with that of Mr. E. L. Lutyens, and so forth.

Mr. Baillie Scott lives at Bedford, and from this town an illustrated catalogue may be got of furniture designed by him and made by Mr. John P. White at the Pyghtle Works. I am able to give illustrations of some examples of this furniture, and with them two typical rooms by Mr. Scott, these being reproduced by kind permission of Messrs. George Newnes, Limited.

One picture, you will find, represents the interior of a kitchen at Elmwood Cottage in the Garden City. It is an example of a modest arrangement suitable for small houses. The fixed seat in the ingle and the dresser are of English elm, while the rest of the furniture is antique and of the simple cottage kind. The floor is brick, the walls are whitewashed like the ceiling, and the usual dado and frieze give place here to structure and the pleasant restful tones of innocent woodwork and plain whitewash.

Thence we pass to a hall in a terrace house of the smaller kind such as may be met with in England on the outskirts of any town. In such houses, as a rule, we find a gloomy, narrow hall with an umbrella stand, a wonderfully impracticable chair, and a startling wall-paper; then there are the usual rectangular compartments known by courtesy as the dining-room and the study, small places, of course, and filled to overflowing with oddments of furniture picked up at random.

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

Mr. Scott breaks away from this tradition and forms one large room, cosy and pleasant to look at. He puts the dining-table in a recess, and the recess has at the side a little door for service, so that the table may be laid and cleared without traffic across the room ; and this good idea has another advantage, doing away with the necessity of a second fire for the dining-room. As the outlook behind the house was not pleasant, Mr. Scott made the window small and put in pale amber glass to mellow the light while hiding an ugly view. The woodwork and the new furnishings are in a tone of grey green, while the rest of the colour-scheme consists mainly of a good, warm white for the plastered walls and ceiling, relieved by the brickwork of the fireplace.

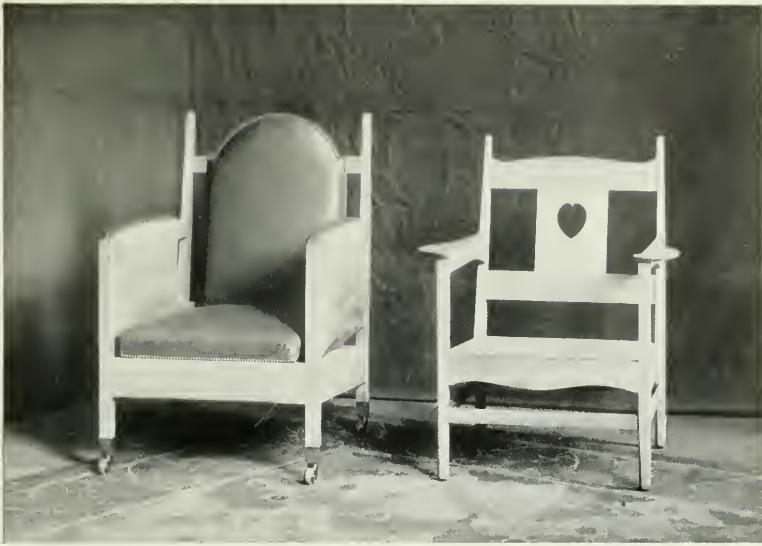
In Mr. Scott's book there is another hall, showing the same principles of design, but in relation to a large country house. Here the aim has been to get away from the usual rectangular apartment, and in an ordered irregularity to give variety of light and shade. Mr. Scott depends for his decorative effect on structure as expressed in beams and posts, attaching little importance here to the adornment of surfaces. The very substance of the house is thus expressed in timber, in plaster and in stone, while the brackets to the beams take the form of conventional representations of the various woodland trees in the neighbourhood.

The central electrolier represents in wrought iron a wreath of mountain ash with white enamelled flowers

FURNITURE, BY M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT

and scarlet berries. The furniture—apart from such fitments as were designed with the house itself—is mainly of a simple antique kind; and note that the grand piano—usually a great encumbrance in a small room—is put away in a shady corner of the staircase.

SOME EXAMPLES OF SIMPLE FURNITURE



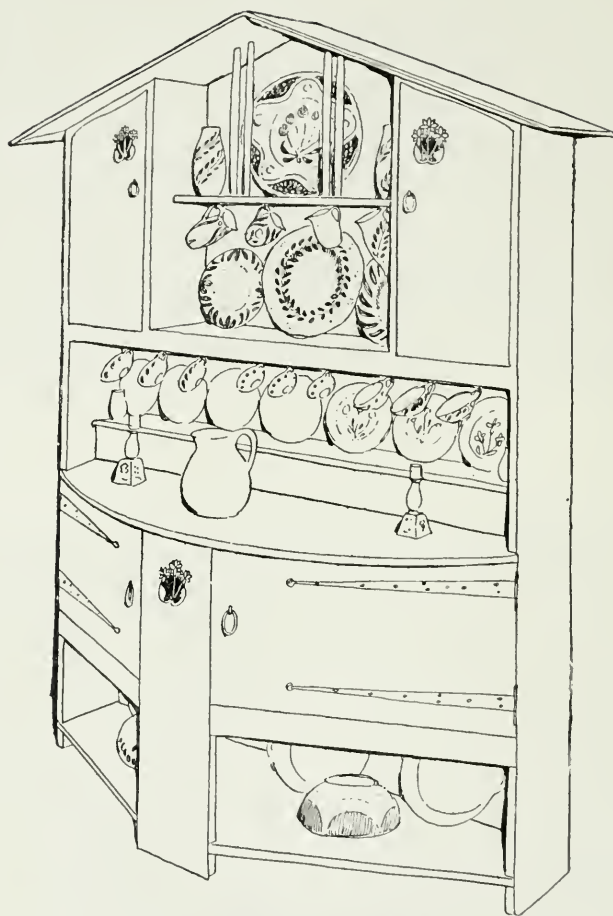
OAK CHAIRS

Designed by C. F. A. VOYSEY, Architect



ASH CHAIRS, STAINED AND WAXED

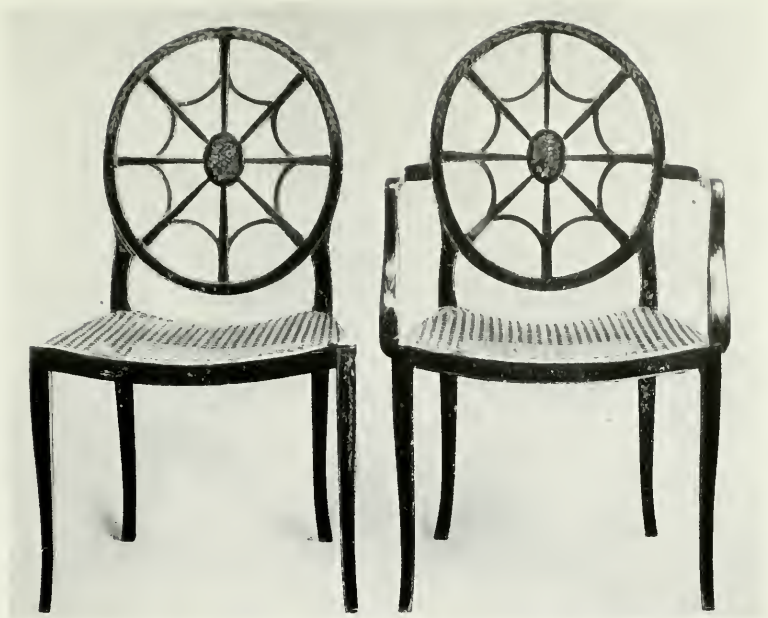
Designed by E. L. LUTYENS, F.R.I.B.A., Architect



DRESSER SIDEBOARD

4 ft. 6 ins. wide. In oak, inlaid with pewter, chony, and coloured woods

Designed by M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT, and made by JOHN P. WHITE, Bedford



DINING-ROOM CHAIRS

Made by ROBERT CHRISTIE, George Street, Portman Square. London

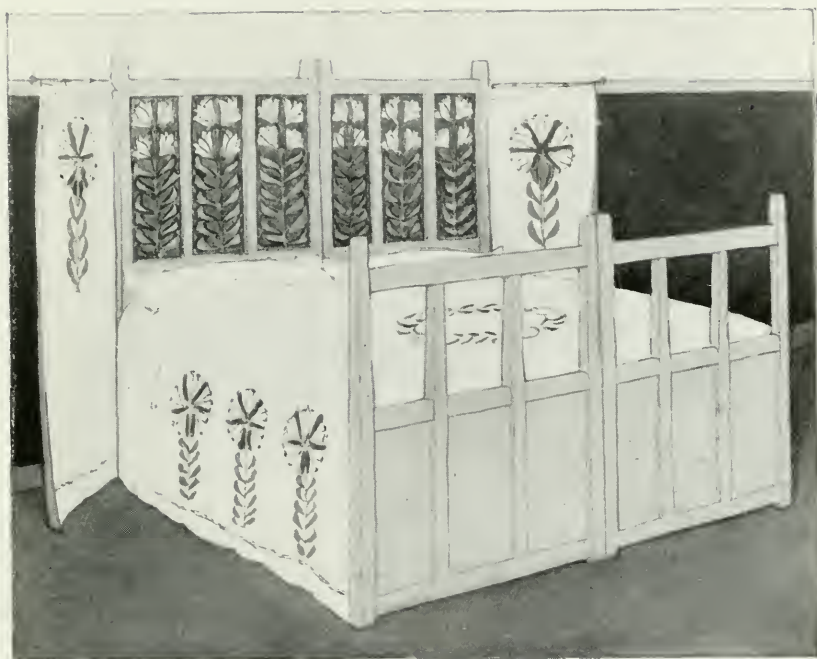


OAK ARM CHAIR
Upholstered



OAK ARM CHAIR
Upholstered with hide

Made by LIBERTY & Co., Regent Street, London



TWIN BEDSTEAD. WITH COLOURED GESSO PANELS

Designed by M. H. BAILLIE SCOTT, made by J. P. WHITE. Bedford



BOW BACK SETTEE
Unpolished oak, 5 ft. long



COUNTRY COTTAGE FURNITURE
Round Oak Table, 3 ft. diameter : Wheel-back Windsor Chairs,
Plain Oak, unpolished

Made by HEAL & SONS, Tottenham Court Road, London



ARM CHAIR
Stained brown, with rush seat



HIGH-BACK CHAIR
Stained brown, with rush seat

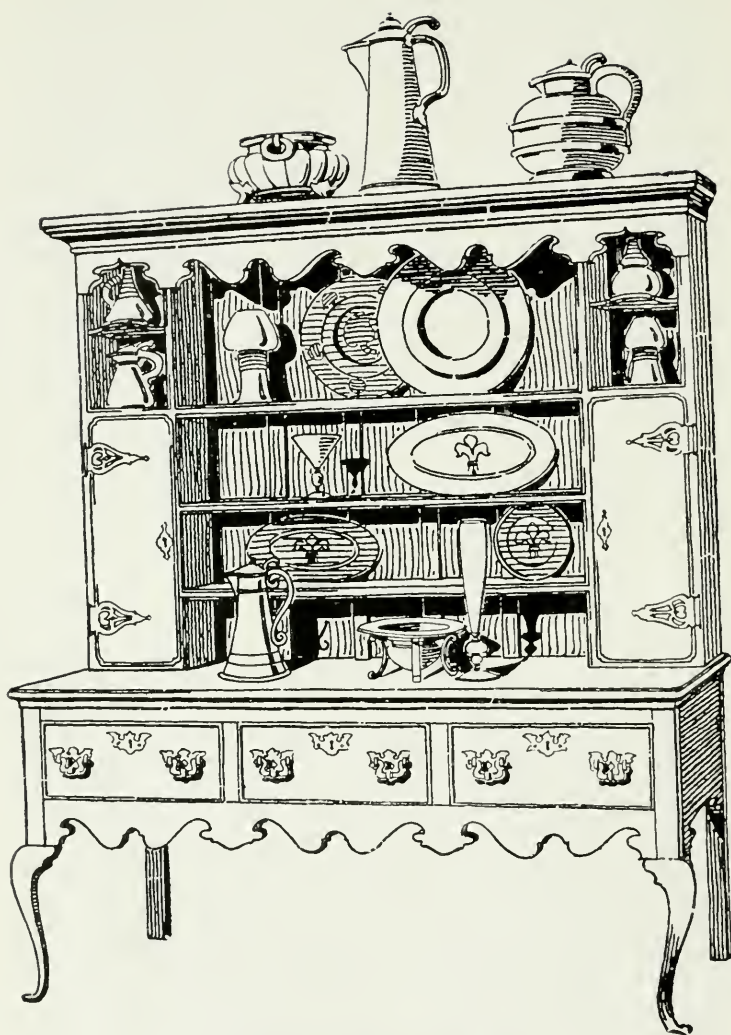


ARM CHAIR
Stained brown, with rush seat



ARM CHAIR
Stained brown, with rush seat

Made by LIBERTY & Co., Regent St., London



WELSH DRESSER IN OAK

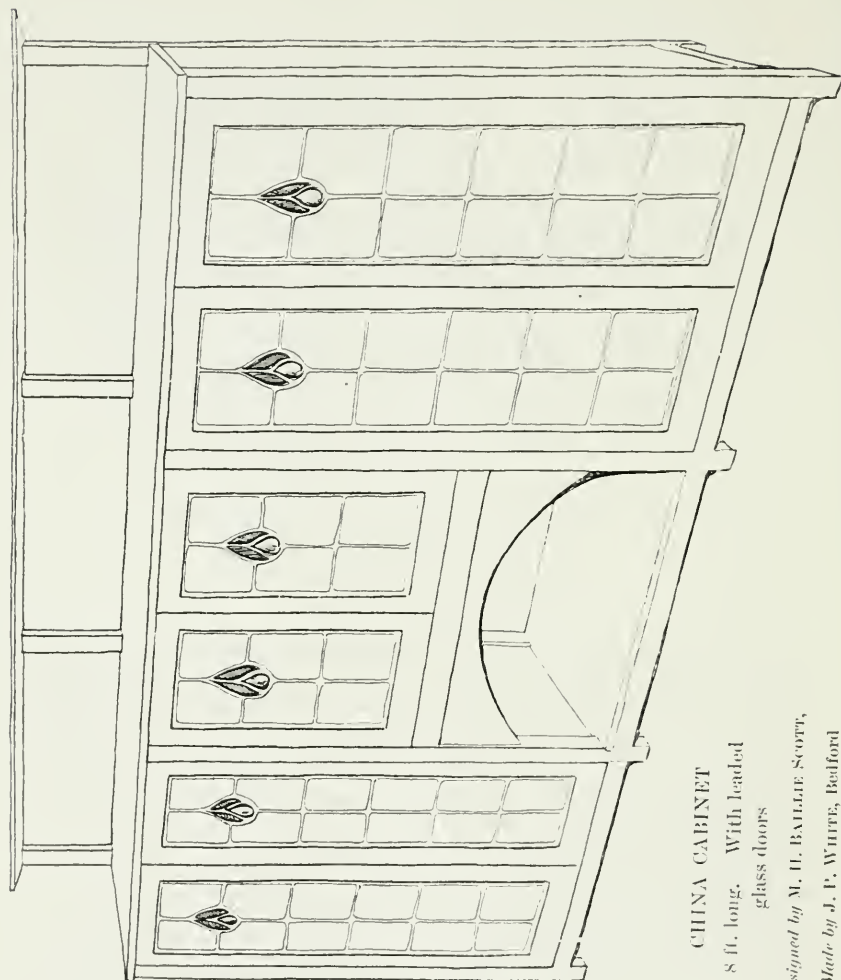
6 ft. long, with brass fittings

Made by STORY & Co., Kensington, London, W.



PLAIN OAK FURNITURE

Made by HEAL & SON, Tottenham Court Road, London



CHINA CABINET

8 ft. long. With leaded
glass doors

Designed by M. H. BATTLE SCOTT,

Made by J. F. WHITE, Bedford



OAK WASHSTAND

With marble top, tiled back, two towel rails and cupboard under. 2 ft. 6 in. wide



OAK WASHSTAND

With marble top, tiled back, two towel rails and cupboards under. 3 ft. 6 in. wide

Made by HEAL & SONS, London



SUSSEX ARM-CHAIR
In Black



"ROSSETTI" ARM-CHAIR
In Black



SUSSEX SINGLE CHAIR
In Black



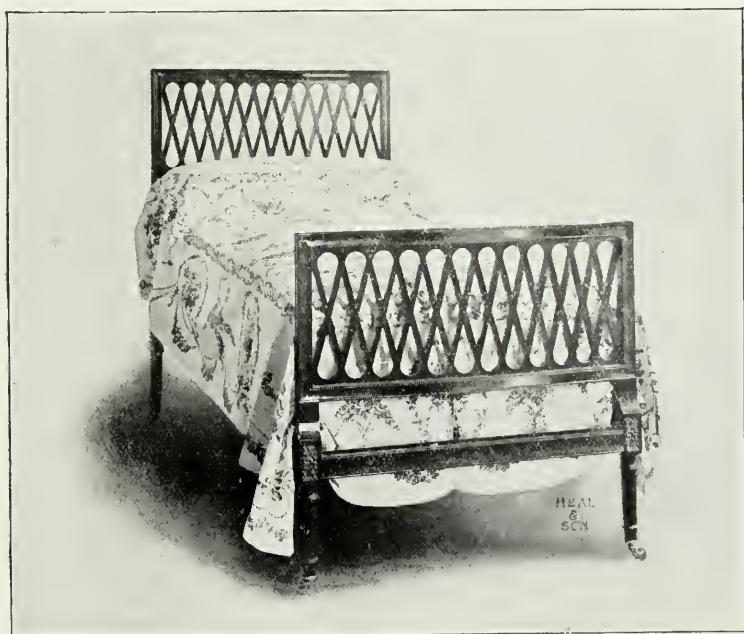
ARM CHAIR
In Brown Stain

MORRIS & Co., 419, Oxford Street, London

SOME EXAMPLES OF RICHER FURNITURE



CHARLES II. BED
Made by HEAL & SON, London



HEPPLEWHITE BED
Made by HEAL & SON, London



ENGLISH CHAIRS IN STYLES OF THE XVIII. CENTURY

Made by ROBERT CHRISTIE, London



WARDROBE IN ENGLISH WALNUT

By SIDNEY H. BARNESLEY, Craftsman



OAK WARDROBE WITH GILT MOULDINGS

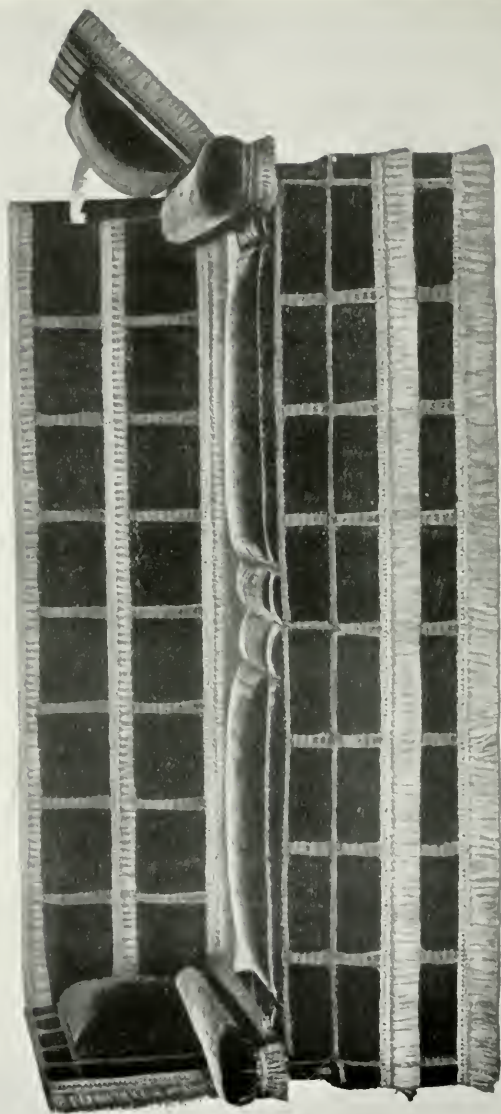
Designed by MR. OGILVIE, of the Guild of Handicraft, Campton, Glos.



WALNUT WARDROBE

4 ft. 3in. wide

Designed by E. L. LUTYENS, F.R.I.B.A.



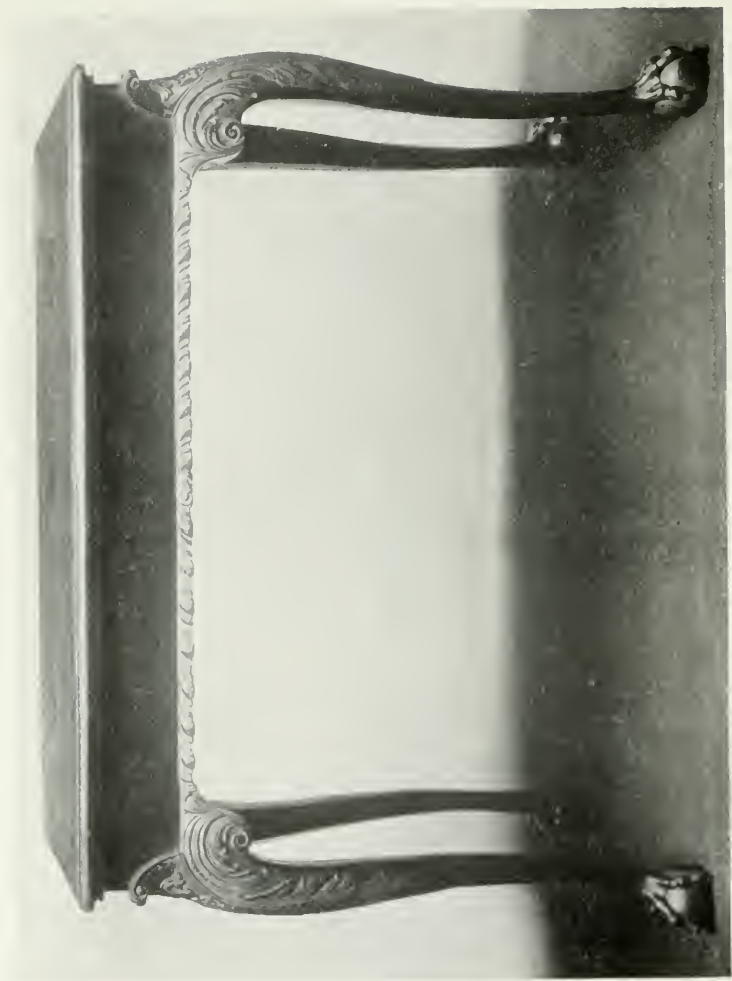
SOFA IN THE ENGLISH STYLE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY,
ABOUT THE YEAR 1620

Made by ROBERT CURTIS, 102 George Street, London, W.



DRESSER

Designed by R. S. LORIMER, Architect, Edinburgh



ENGLISH TABLE, EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

From a photograph sent by JAMES ORRICK, R.I.



WALNUT WASHING-TABLES

Designed by E. L. LUTYESS, F.R.I.B.A.



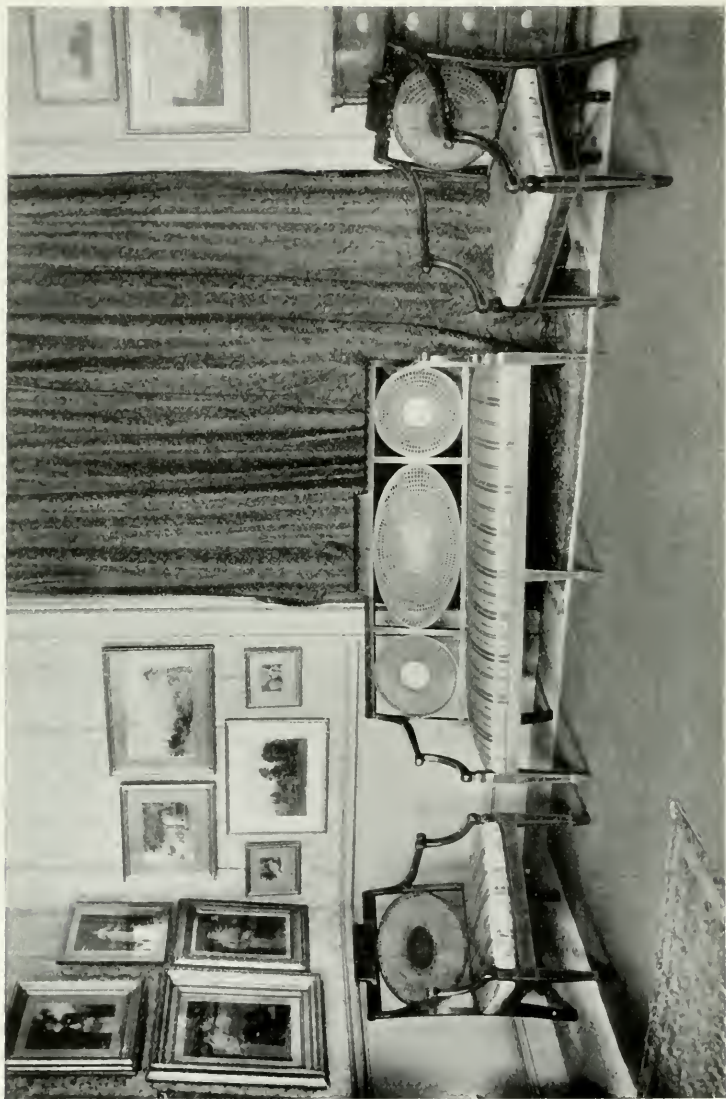
CHARLES II. CHAIR

From the Collection of BASIL DIGBY, Esq., 42 Gower Street, London, W.C.



WRITING-DESK IN ENGLISH WALNUT

By SIDNEY H. BARNSELY



CORNER OF A DRAWING-ROOM WITH SATINWOOD FURNITURE BY SHERATON

From a photograph lent by James Orrock, R.I.



INLAID SATINWOOD BUREAU

From the Collection of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq., London

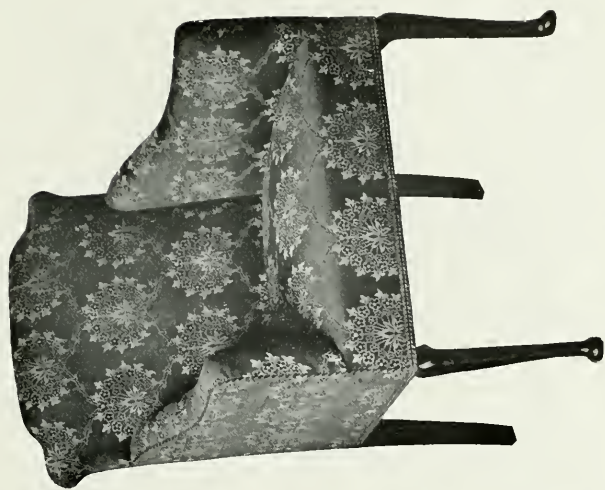


PAINTED SATINWOOD BUREAU BOOKCASE

From the Collection of BASIL DIGHTON, Esq., London



GRANDFEATHER CHAIR
COVERED IN 3-PLY MORRIS TAPESTRY



SEATON ARM-CHAIR
IN "FLOWERING NET" TAPESTRY

Made by Morris & Co., London



INLAID CABINET OF ITALIAN WALNUT IN THE
QUEEN ANNE STYLE

Designed by MERVYN MACARTNEY, Architect, London

Made by MORRIS & Co., London

CHAPTER XII

SANITARY APPLIANCES

ALTHOUGH jerry-builders have lived on the nation's home life like foxes on poultry yards, a great improvement has taken place in domestic sanitation. To build bad drains underground is a crime against public health ; to put up sham work in other parts of a house, though harmful, is not connected with small-pox and typhoid fever, so it has come to be looked upon as an evil of common business, and the word business covers a multitude of frauds. Who can guess what men will do when they pass through their front gates into the daily competitions of trade ?

Those who earn their living as servants to our domestic wants and whims may be divided into a couple of big armies, one superintended by the medical officers of health, and the other not. There must be something very wholesome in the fear which those medical officers inspire, for all sanitary appliances improve, and with such rapidity that a layman is bewildered by their variety and excellence. Manufacturers seem to jostle one another in their eagerness to be thorough and practical.

Their catalogues, too, are made up with great care

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

and judgment, but I notice, not without surprise, that sanitary experts are not immune from the microbes of æsthetic taste, which breed fashionable epidemics in the home arts. This matter is one which medical officers of health cannot bring under their discipline, and perhaps a sense of humour in those who buy is enough to check the maladies of art on baths, lavatories, cast-iron sinks, and the fittings of closets. Even the valveless syphon tanks known as "water waste-preventers" are sometimes very decorated, and you will find sprays of flowering plants treated in a pretty-pretty fashion. They might be china ornaments on the mantelshef in a third-rate boarding-house.

Pattern, pattern everywhere, and nothing to see besides: this popular weakness should not appear on sanitary appliances.

Perhaps baths may be decorated in a simple fashion, with line ornament under the brims; it is a question of taste, like another matter connected with washing and cleanliness. Old ladies have often a great dislike for a bath-room common to a whole family. "I want my own bath in my own room," one of them tells me. "You see, I was not brought up to the modern custom of using a bath which many use daily. Ideas of cleanliness change, and I should feel unhappy if I were obliged to use every one's bath. To my mind—of course I'm very old-fashioned—the new custom is not *clean*."

That is one point of view. But other ladies would rather forgive a bad dressmaker than live in homes



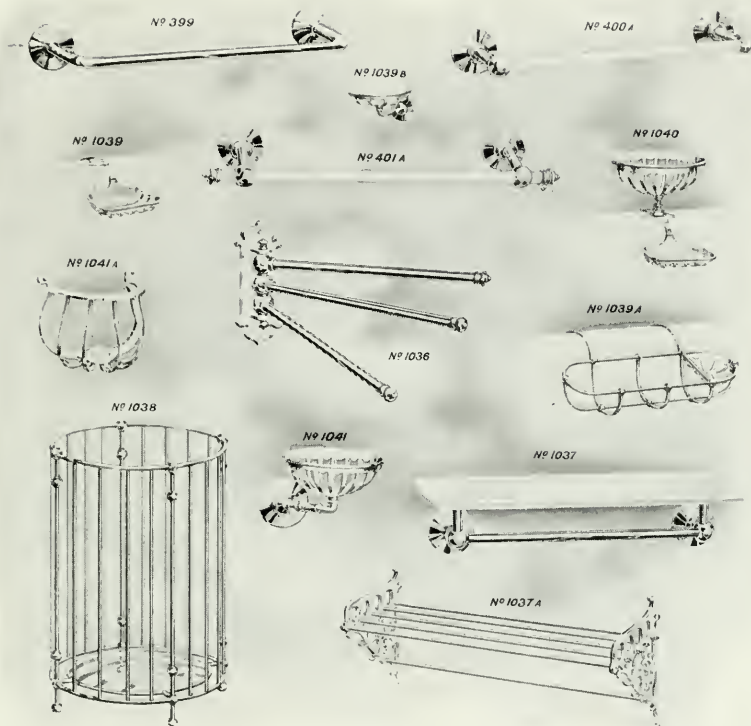
BATH AND FITTINGS, THE "NEWLYN" DESIGN

Made by DOULTON & Co., London



SITZ BATHS

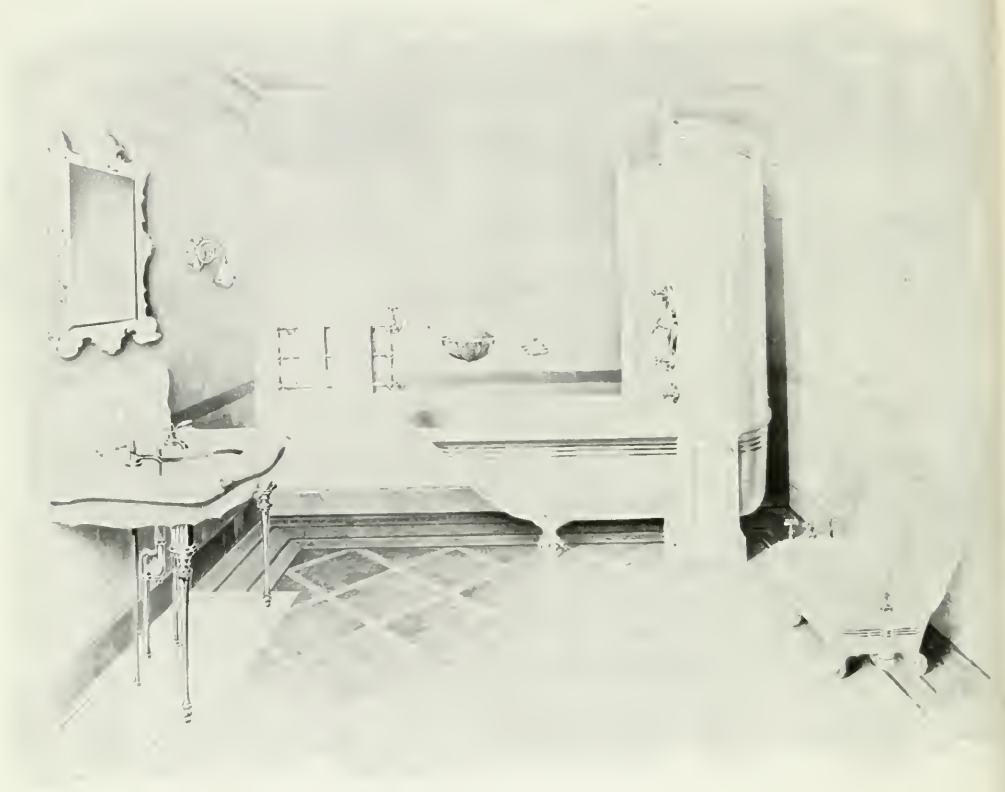
By DOULTON & Co., London



BATH-ROOM FITTINGS

399, 400, 401, Towel Rails ; 400A, 401A, Glass Rails, brass mounts ; 1036, Hinged Towel Rail, with 3 rails ; 1037, Glass Shelf for Towels, 3 ft. long, with bracket and towel rail, brass fittings ; 1037A, Bracket and Tray for Towels, with 1 rail ; 1038, 1038A, Towel Baskets ; 1039, Hanging Soap Dish ; 1039A, Combined Hanging Soap and Sponge Dish ; 1039B, Soap Dish for Wall ; 1040, Combined Soap and Sponge Dish for bath roll ; 1041, Sponge Dish for Wall ; 1041A, Sponge Holder for wall

DOULTON & Co., Lambeth, London



BATH ROOM

The Fittings consist of a canopy bath, 6' long, "Doulton" sitz bath, statuary marble lavatory, statuary marble dished base for lavatory, plated towel rail, sponge holder, and soap dish.

Made by Doulton & Co., Lambeth, London

SANITARY APPLIANCES

without common bath-rooms. They are made uneasy by the knowledge that some of their friends have taken old houses. "No bath-rooms, my dear," they say, and with a shocked astonishment, as if a comfortable bath by a bedroom fire were unfriendly to soap and water, like campaigning life in South Africa. And there is also a kind of Spartan rigour in the hard comforts which "ideal" bath-rooms offer to their devotees. One lady tells me, in a letter profusely underlined, that all bath-rooms should be tiled, not the walls only, but the floors too; and the doors must be white, painted with washable colours, and the window-curtains in waterproof fabrics. There is one concession to human weakness: it is not necessary to stand with hot wet feet on the cold tiles, and the ritual of bathing kindly mentions the neutral warmth of cork slabs, because cork is easy to sponge with disinfectants.

It is not clear who is to bathe in these cold-looking, waterproof rooms. Provision is made for so much splashing that boys ought to be kept at home, so that fathers might learn from them how to dive in a bath six feet long. Tiles are certainly pretty and clean, but they do add to the usual drawback of bath-rooms, namely, their chilling look, their coldness.

Most bath-rooms are architectural after-thoughts, like dressing-rooms in theatres. Tiny windows let in the north light, and very often there is not space enough for a fireplace. We take our hot baths shiveringly during the winter, get violent colds, and then persuade our family doctors that we have the influenza and that the

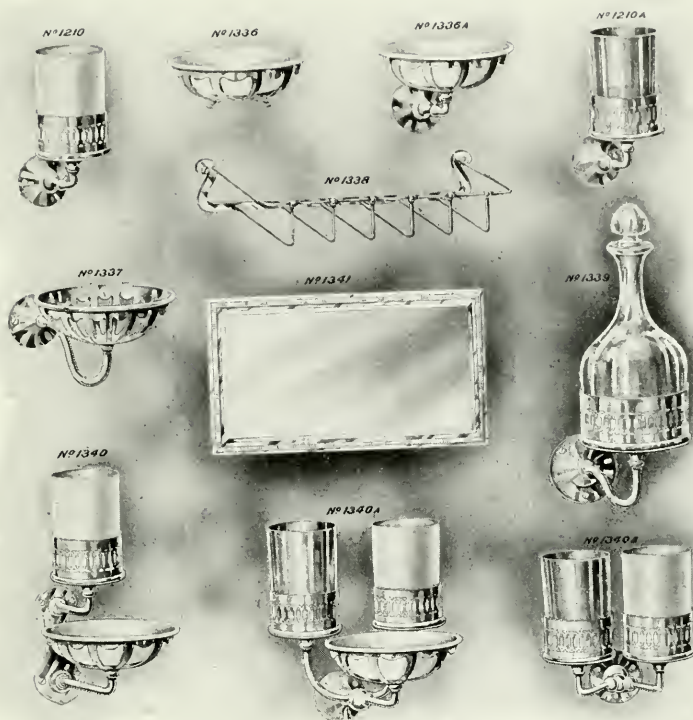
HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

medical world ought to be ashamed of itself, allowing a disease to return to us year after year without any diminution in its worst symptoms and effects. When I think of these ordinary bath-rooms, with their arctic tribulations, the ritual of bathing does not seem to need the further chilliness of glazed tiles.

But this, too, may be a question of taste. For all that, I am tempted to dogmatise on two points, for bath-rooms ought to face the morning sun, and have fire-places for use on cold days. Better by far the old hand-bath by a good fire than a cold bath-room which cannot be warmed.

We are approaching a time when sitz baths will not be disliked by housemaids—a time when every bedroom will have a lavatory with a good basin and hot and cold water, a convenience very much to be desired. We may then use sitz baths if we please, and empty the water into the lavatory basin, winning the goodwill of servants and saving ourselves from that little morning game of hide-and-seek that is so annoying when half a dozen early risers want the bath-room at the same hour daily.

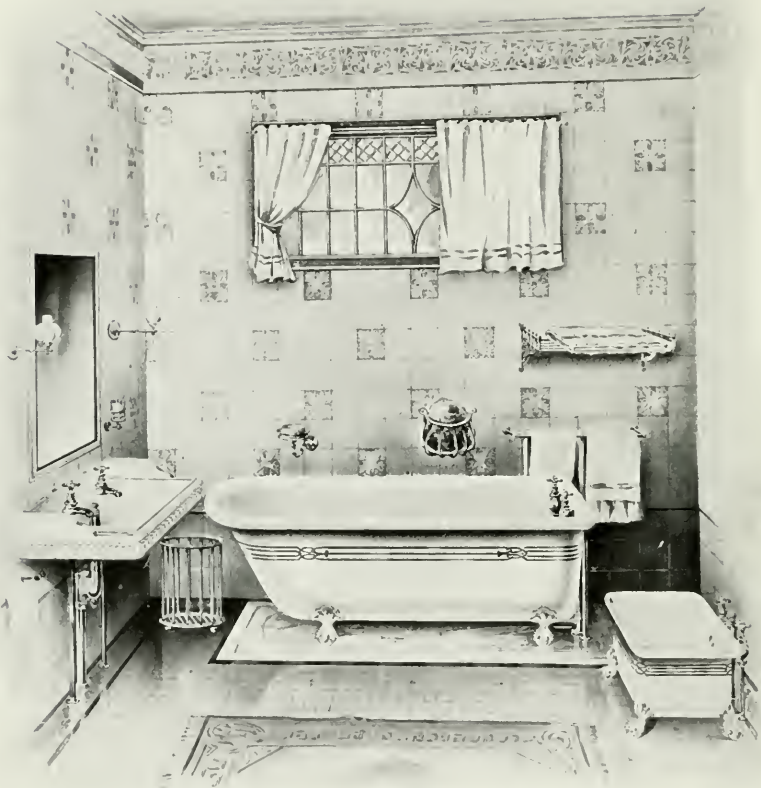
Bedroom lavatories are made in many styles, all good from a scientific point of view, but improvements have yet to be made on the decorative side. Some lavatories are carried by metal brackets, and it is of course essential that the metal should look strong enough—a point to be remembered by makers of sanitary appliances. Elegance may be put in wrong places. Many lavatories stand



FITTINGS FOR LAVATORIES

1210, Queensware Tooth Brush Vase, with plated brass holder : 1210A, Glass Tumbler, with plate brass holder : 1336, Queensware Soap Dish, with plated brass frame : 1336A, Queensware Soap Dish, to fix to wall : 1337, Sponge Holder, brass plated : 1338, Comb and Brush Holder, brass plated : 1339, Carafe, with plate brass holder : 1340, Tooth Brush and Soap Holder in plated brass, including Queensware tooth brush vase and dish ; 1340A, Tooth Brush, Soap and Tumbler Holder in plated brass, including glass tumbler and Queensware tooth brush vase and dish ; 1340B, Tooth Brush and Tumbler Holder, including glass tumbler and Queensware tooth brush holder ; 1341, Bevelled Plate Glass Mirror, with plated brass frame

DOULTON & Co., Lambeth, London



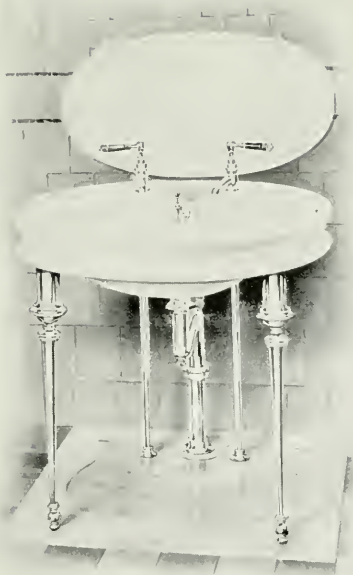
ANOTHER BATH-ROOM

This Bath-room is a type suitable for a house of moderate size : it is simple and neat, everything being white with gold lines and plated fittings

THE FITTINGS CONSIST OF

A 5 ft. 6 in. Bath, a white vitreous enamelled foot bath, Queensware lavatory, skirting and frieze, plated tray for towels, plated towel rails, and towel basket, plated sponge holder, soap dish, and toothbrush holder

DOULTON & Co., London



BEDROOM LAVATORIES



BEDROOM LAVATORIES WITH ENCLOSURES

By DOULTON & Co., London



LARGE AREA WASH-DOWN CLOSET

By DOULTON & Co., London

SANITARY APPLIANCES

on "decorative legs," as catalogues point out now and then, but there is no reason why a decorative leg should look too thin for the purpose which it has to serve. Sanitary appliances are made so carefully, and do so much credit to English workmanship, that one does not expect to meet with mistakes even on the art side. There is no need at all for flower decorations on closets, nor is it structural to put attenuated legs under a strong lavatory. But even these mistakes are unaccompanied by the slipshod work that is common in many other branches of English manufacture.

Then, as regards bath-room tiles, experts seem to believe that they should be cream white, with a few coloured ones arranged in a chess-board pattern along the dado and the frieze ; but, as bath-rooms have the reputation of being the coldest rooms in most houses, warmer-looking tiles would not be amiss, at least in ordinary homes. The deep red of old Chinese pottery, known as *sang-de-beuf*, would be cheery and beautiful, and Persian and Rhodian wares would suggest other colours. Let us hope, meantime, that pretty realistic flowers will not be adapted from Victorian chintzes as in recent wall-papers.

But these matters of detail are interesting only to those of us who wish to build houses or who gave such hostages to fortune some years ago. Under a three years' lease we cannot do much to improve the chill places which landlords advertise with untiring pride—"Bath-rooms (hot and cold)"—the words in brackets

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

applying to the water when the kitchen fires burn too much coal. The best thing we can do is to paint the walls with Duresco colour, or with Hall's Distemper.

Perhaps the worst bath-rooms are to be found in flats for moderate incomes. As a rule they have pigeon-hole windows which let in light from the well ; they are cold even in summer, while in winter they have the same disadvantage as the little entrance hall and the long passage, which cannot be warmed ; and if you try to ventilate them your flat becomes as draughty as a tunnel. When will common sense come by its own in popular domestic architecture ?

Cold bath-rooms ought never to be used during the winter months. It is cheaper by far to buy two or three sitz baths or to write for information to the Bab Bath Co., Pendleton, Manchester, whose light and portable baths, pressed into shape from a single sheet of the best steel, are strong and convenient. Some are galvanised, others enamelled, and others plated with nickel or with silver. They range in price from 13*s.* 6*d.* to 16*s.* 6*d.*, with an extra charge of 3*s.* 6*d.* for a wooden stand, and of 22*s.* 6*d.* for a carrying case in basket-work.

For the rest, there is no room here for a list of the many firms that make good sanitary appliances, but special attention may be drawn to Messrs. Doulton and Co., Lambeth, London, and Messrs. Davis, Bennett and Co., Westminster, London. I am giving a number of

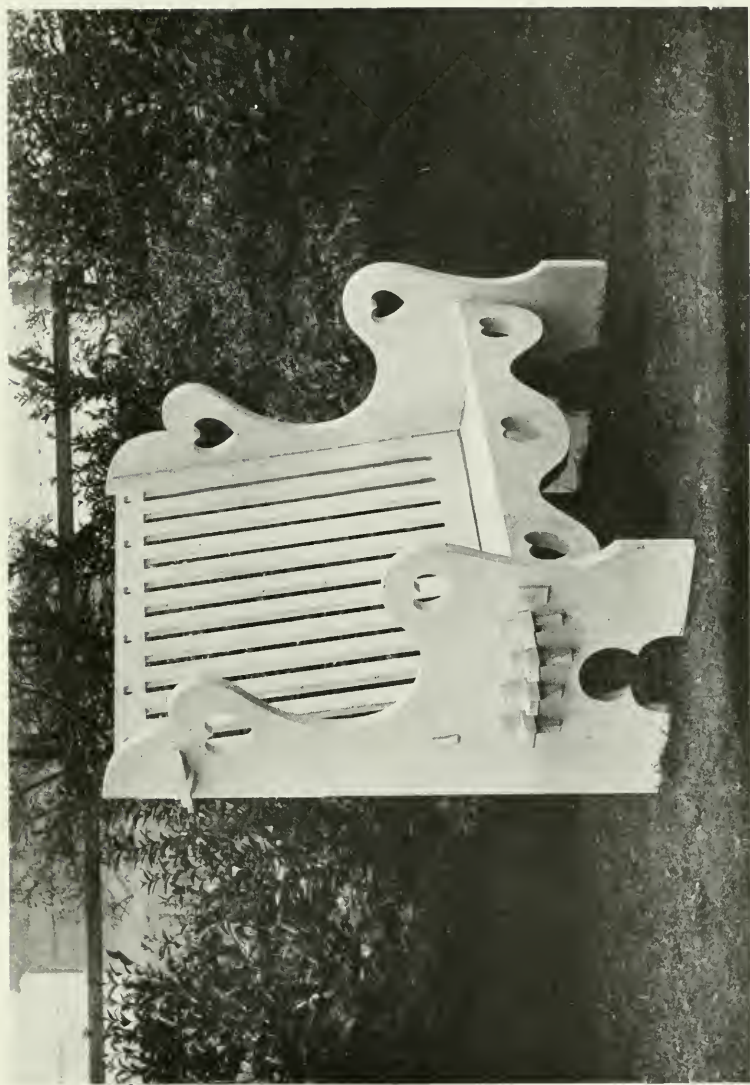
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SANITARY APPLIANCES

illustrations of Doulton's work, enough to show its utility and its thoroughness. The improved sitz baths are particularly interesting, and may be recommended for dressing-rooms in new houses.

All necessary information is given in the catalogues issued by the leading manufacturers.

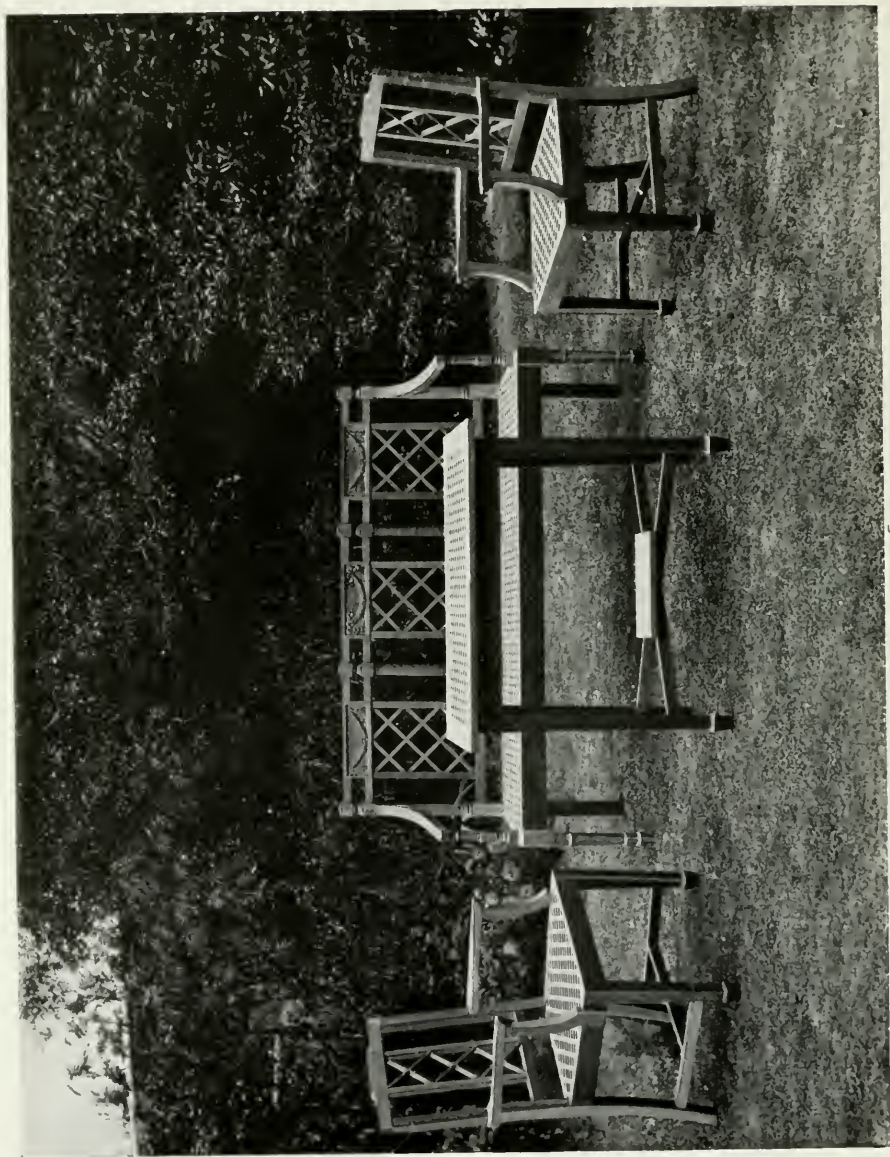
SOME EXAMPLES OF GARDEN FURNITURE



“THE SEAT OF THE THIRTEEN HEARTS”

It can be taken to pieces and fitted together again in a few minutes. When packed for a journey in a case it occupies only fourteen cubic feet. There is a table to match

Designed by the Hon. Mrs. ANSTRUTHER, and made by J. P. WHITE, Bedford



"WOBURN" GARDEN FURNITURE
In oak, in deal, or in teak, this being the best
Made by J. P. Warré, Bedford



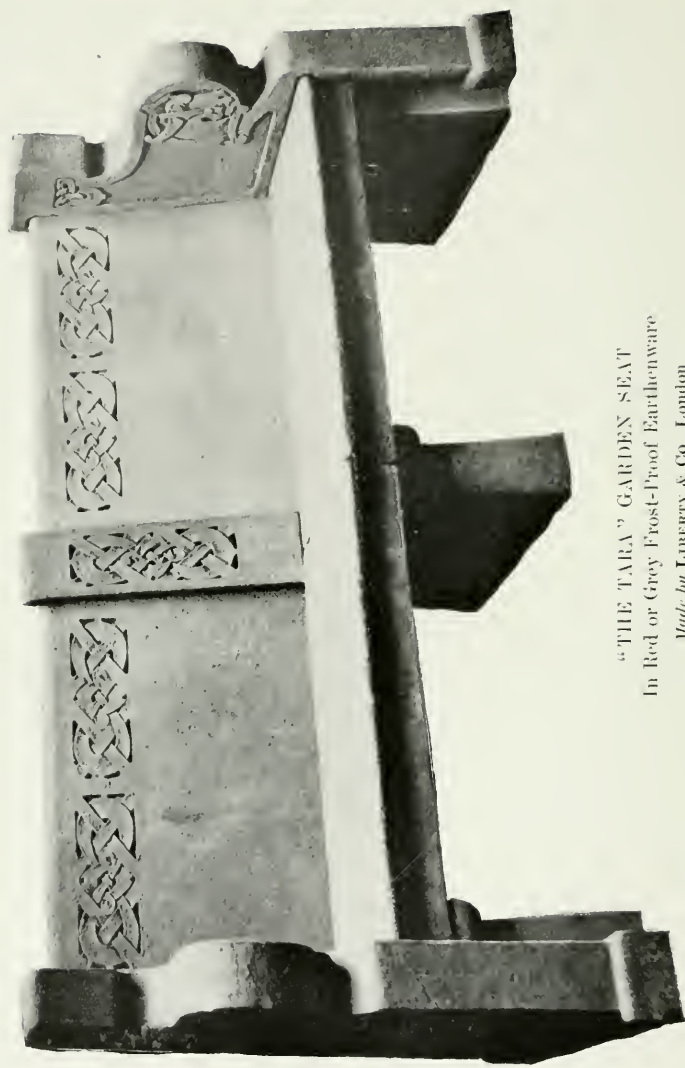
GARDEN SEAT, THE "BIDDENHAM" DESIGN

Made by J. P. WHITE, Bedford



GARDEN SEAT, HARLINGTON DESIGN

Made by J. P. WHITE, Bedford



"THE TARA" GARDEN SEAT
In Red or Grey Frost-Proof Earthenware
Made by Liberty & Co., London



GARDEN FURNITURE



This seat—the “Derby” pattern—has been designed to meet the demand for a semi-circular seat at a low price, and will be found very light and easy to move. It unscrews in the centre into two pieces

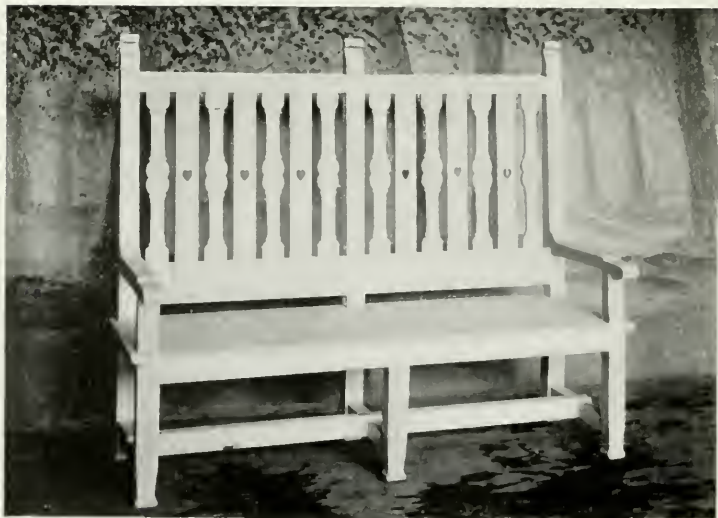
Made by J. P. WHITE, Bedford



THE "HATLEY" DESIGN

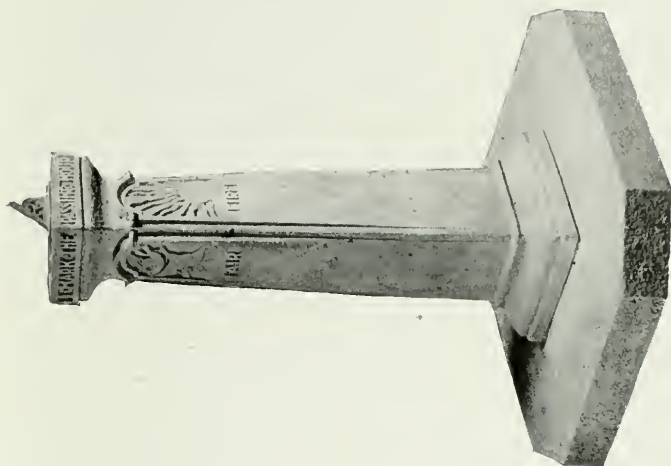
Seats of this type are made in four sections, and can be fitted together in a few minutes with thumbscrews. It is not advisable to have the seat less than 3 feet diameter inside, even if the tree for which it is required is much less than that, for there is no need that the whole of the space inside the circular seat should be filled by the tree

Made by J. P. WHITE, Bedford



GARDEN SEAT

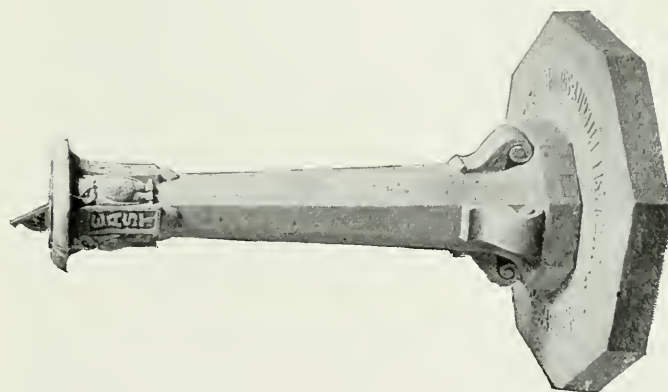
Made by J. P. WHITE, Bedford



SUNDIAL, "THE ALCEA"

Garden Pottery in Red or Grey Frost-Proof Earthenware

Designed and made by LIBERTY & Co., London



SUNDIAL, "THE ATHENA"



GARDEN FURNITURE IN TEAK, PAINTED WHITE

Made by J. P. Wurte, Bedford

PART III
THE HOUSE AND ITS ROOMS





ROOM IN A HOUSE AT BLIDFORD
MESSRS. MORRIS & CO., OXFORD ST., LONDON

CHAPTER I

SOME HINTS ON ROOMS

THERE is a widespread delusion to the effect that the art of house furnishing can be taught by means of recipe directions to fit in with all circumstances. "Tell me how to furnish my dining-room," says one person. "What decoration is right for a study?" another asks. "What is the best covering for chairs?" has long been a favourite question, because the materials in many shops have been so deplorably bad as a rule. Recipes are not of the slightest good in art. Every room needs a treatment of its own, determined by its light, size and shape, its purpose, the hobbies and tastes of those who live in it, and—more important still—the amount of money to be spent on its furniture and decoration. Every room in a house, again, should be in harmony with the others, yet unlike them. Most of us fall into error either by making all the rooms too much the same, or by giving too much contrast between their styles or between their colour-schemes.

These factors differ, more or less, in all households; it is thus impossible for a book to deal with them; the only thing a writer can do is to explain the grammar

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

of the household arts and crafts, leaving each reader to apply the rules or principles.

One part of the grammar is concerned with architectural matters ; it points out what is most desirable in good rooms, how they should be placed in their relation to the sun and to each other, and what tenants should expect to find in structural details of proportion. But, as a house may range in size from a tiny cottage to the largest country seat, these general questions are not easy to discuss ; and so we must choose a definite type of home most likely to be useful to the Great Public. For example, what may be taken as a fair average house for the Middle Classes? May we not give it the following accommodation ?—

1. The service part, the household offices ; a bedroom, a kitchen, a scullery, a pantry, a closet, and a bath, this to be put in the scullery and to have a wooden cover, so that the bath may be used during the day as a table for necessary things.

2. Passages, corridors, and a staircase or two.

3. A hall—perhaps only an entrance hall, or vestibule.

4. A nursery.

5. The bath-room and lavatory.

6. A closet. (See the illustrations of sanitary appliances.)

7. Four or five bedrooms.

8. Three day-rooms, one for meals, another for talk and family life, and a third for hobbies : that is to say, for the favourite recreation, no matter what it may be.



THE HALL IN A LONDON HOUSE

By permission of FRANK BRANGWYN, A.R.A.



INNER HALL, LITTLECOURT

WALTER CAVE, *Architect*, London

SOME HINTS ON ROOMS

One family may need a studio for painting, another a work-room for carpentry or metal-craft, a third may collect books, and a fourth play table billiards. The point is that one day-room should be free from the discipline of tidiness; should never look as though it were put in order "to receive company."

The apartments mentioned here may be divided into two classes, the major and the minor, not because of any real difference in their importance, but because the minor are understood by all good housewives. The service quarters, for instance, are considered with anxious care, thanks to the difficulty of keeping good servants—when they are found by rare good fortune. It is impossible for us to enjoy that old snobbishness that put servants underground, and treated them as badly as actors are treated now in theatre dressing-rooms. A bad kitchen soon makes family life impossible; and if cooks and housemaids grumble about their bedrooms, we expect to find nerves in the parlour.

Again, the bath-room has been discussed (pp. 275-278), and nothing more need be said about it. As to the nursery, every mother has her own ideas, but there are just a few points which may be offered here for consideration. In the first place, obtrusive theories of education are out of place in a nursery, which should be a play-room, a place for happy noise and amusement. The more we try to teach little children, the sooner we give them a dislike for knowledge. Yet I have seen nurseries where reading lessons were given from

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

words printed on a wall-paper, and where all the decoration was false just in order that children might be taught by silly pictures. Some paperhangings are like toy books, giving pictorially all the nursery rhymes and their human characters. Of course, they are bad decorative art, being much too realistic for a wall-paper; and to teach children to like them is to prove that parents have yet to be educated. Little ones are not taught to spell dog with two "g's," but we often train them in art to crow with delight over bad spelling and false grammar, though the eye is all-important to any system of education. Accustom it to good colour and to fine ornament, and its judgment may be relied upon. Ought we to forget this fact when we choose decorations for a nursery?

And here is another point. A nursery should have an amusing shape, with rounded corners and with a recess for hide-and-seek; one part might be raised into a small enclosure guarded by strong railings, where a little king could sit in state and hold his court, or where a prisoner could be shut up during another game. Let us remember that a happy, well-made nursery is a day-dream for a life. It is never forgotten.

Nursery furniture cannot be too strong. Many a little heart has suffered from the absurd chairs that break when they are ridden upon as horses, or when they are thrown over because they represent killed soldiers or captured towns. Sturdy oak chairs are the best, and see that they are fitted together with good strong tenons

SOME HINTS ON ROOMS

and wooden pegs. Glued furniture is useless for nurseries, though often found there.

In badly-built houses the nursery has to be quieter than is good for its playmates; the word “Hush” is heard far too often, producing in children a timid self-distrust which may endure for many years; and for this reason, between given hours of the day, they should be encouraged to make as much noise as they can. It strengthens them, it brings out personal character.

Keep nurse in a good temper by showing incessant thought and consideration. She is not well pleased when pails of fresh water have to be carried from one floor to another, or when the “slops” must be taken for some distance. That is why a scullery is essential to a nursery suite; and let it have a cupboard large enough to hold coal for a week, and a boiler to heat water for the children’s baths. If not a boiler, then a pipe of hot water from the kitchen. When hot water is drawn from a tap in the kitchen itself, nurse and cook are soon at word-blows with each other. Thorough nurses are apt to look down upon other servants; and this proves that their department ought to be kept separate from the service quarters under cook’s discipline.

The truth is, however, that few houses are planned at all adequately for children. Our most recent adventure in domestic building—the Flat System—tries to teach us that children are justified only in families that pay about £500 a year in rent, rates, and taxes; and suburban

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

villas also are planned in accordance with Dean Swift's hatred for a high birth-rate.

Not less remarkable are the bedrooms to be found in the small flats and suburban villas. On this point I have spoken in earlier chapters, but further mention must be made here of the principal mistake, the defective planning. What are the main necessities in a modern bedroom? There are three:

1. Thorough ventilation at all hours of the day and night.

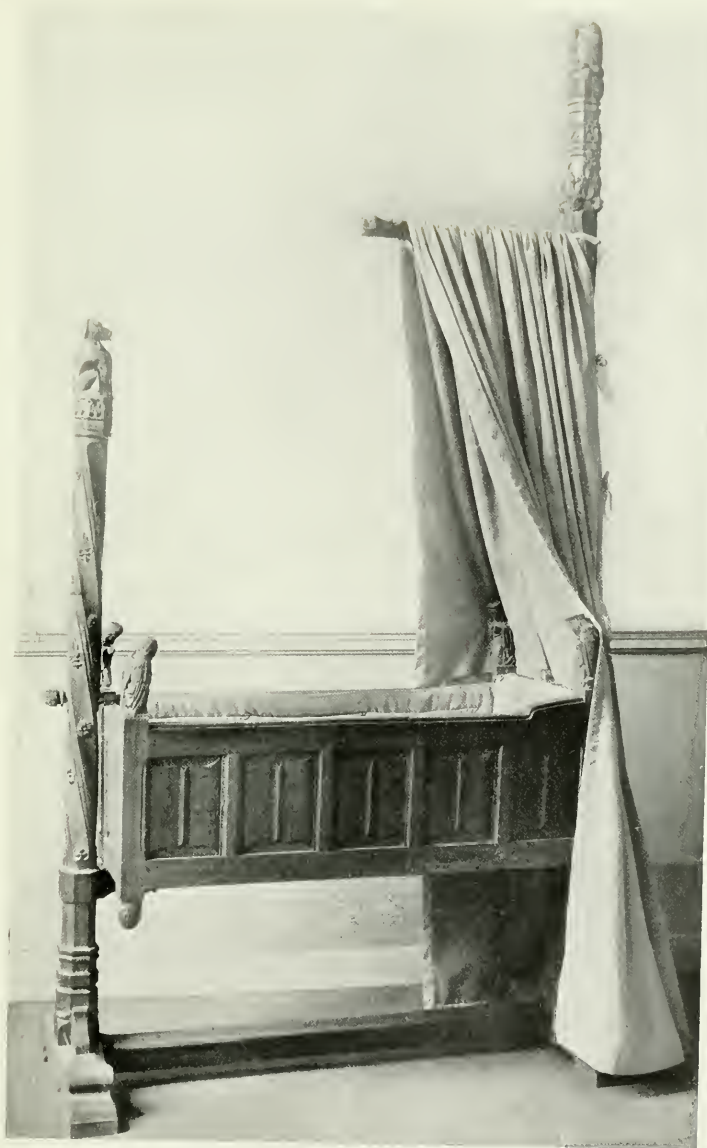
2. Fitments to do away with wardrobes and chests of drawers, so that room-space and air-space may not be wasted.

3. A good position for the bed, not only away from the draught passing between window, door, and fireplace, but free from the early morning light. The foot of a bed should not face a window.

These necessary things are absent in a great many bedrooms. Yet we have Building Acts and Bylaws! The stupidity shown in bedroom planning would dumfound everybody, were it not so common that we are accustomed to make shift with it, somehow, anyhow.

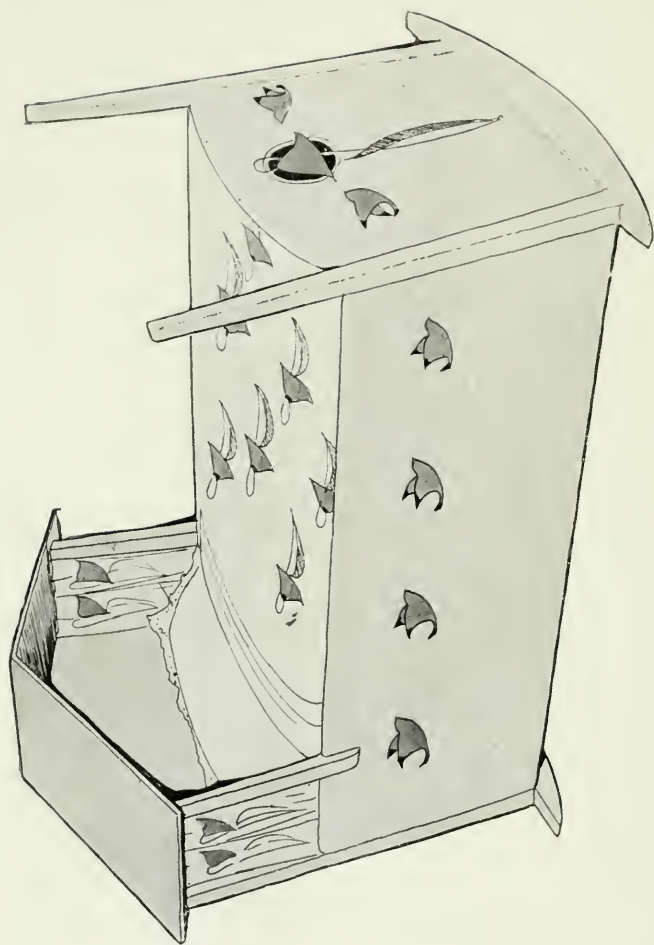
In a small room—and most bedrooms are unduly small to-day, both in villas and in flats—there is often a window almost as wide as the outer wall; the door faces it, and the fireplace has a position very well fitted to make another keen draught. The bed, wherever it is put, stands in a current of air, so the window is

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CRADLE IN CARVED WOOD

Designed by R. S. LORIMER, A.R.S.A.



CRADLE, INLAID WITH EBONY, PEWTER, AND COLOURED WOODS

In oak, mahogany or enamelled white

Designed by M. H. B. Scott, and made by J. F. Wurtz, Bedford

SOME HINTS ON ROOMS

blocked up at night with heavy curtains. What happens then? It is supposed that warm breath rises to the ceiling, but it contains carbonic acid gas, which is heavier than air at an equal temperature; and for this reason, when breath is cooled by rising through a cold atmosphere, the carbonic acid gas begins to sink down to the level of the bed, till at last the breathing zone of air is contaminated, and we awake in the morning unrefreshed by sleep.

Good architects have said that bedroom planning is often harmed by false notions of symmetry. Let us think more of convenience and less of symmetry, they advise. When bedrooms are small and square, why put a very large window in the centre of a small outer wall? If we divide that wall into halves, the half on our right hand could be reserved for a window, while that on the left could be given to the bed, which might occupy either of two positions: first, with its head to the outer wall, or, second, with its head to the left-hand wall and its foot to a fireplace. As to the best position for a door, architects choose the lower corner of the right-hand wall, because the door when opened acts as a screen both to the fireplace and to the bed, while preventing—as much as possible—a direct draught with the window.

On the other hand, when the window has a central position, the following plan may be chosen:

(a) Let the bed stand near the middle of the right-hand wall, with its head to the wall.

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

(b) Put the fireplace opposite, in the centre of the left-hand wall.

(c) Below the fireplace, at the bottom end of that wall, build the door, taking care to let it open from right to left, so that it may screen the bed.

Again, it is convenient to make two central windows close together: then the dressing-table may be placed between them, so that the looking-glass may not be seen from outside.

The late J. J. Stevenson used to say that one of the most frequent mistakes of modern planning was excess of window light. "This not only loses valuable wall-space but it makes the house a worse shelter against the weather; colder in winter and hotter in summer. If the window lighting be exactly in the right place, rooms may be perfectly lit with a comparatively small amount of glass"—a truth forgotten by most householders. "Those windows are too small," they say; "we like plenty of light. We can't have too much of it," they continue, forgetting the half-tons of curtains which they put up in winter. To this ignorance of householders we owe the large, ill-placed windows in small bedrooms.

"It is convenient, especially for visitors' rooms, to arrange a suite, consisting of bedroom, dressing-room, bath-room, &c., so that all may enter off a private passage.

Such an arrangement is especially necessary to give retirement from the noises and traffic of the house,

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SOME HINTS ON ROOMS

when the rooms enter, as is sometimes the case, off a gallery around a great hall.

“It is convenient, also, to place less important bedrooms in sets, so that one group may belong to bachelors, a separate group to young ladies, giving facilities for those long talks at night in each other’s rooms, when, with their back hair down—if we take Mr. Thackeray’s word for it—they open their hearts to each other in mutual confidences.”*

* “House Architecture.” By J. J. Stevenson. Vol. ii. pp. 68, 69.

CHAPTER II

THE DINING-ROOM

WHAT is the dining-room to be? Is it to serve only as a *salle à manger*, a place for meals, or should it be used also as a family parlour? This question has to be considered by most households.

There can be no doubt that food is more enjoyable when it is not served in ordinary day-rooms. If a parlour is used for meals, there are regular interruptions to its life; books and papers are put away, needlework is laid aside, and so forth; and we feel all the time that the room is so familiar, so much associated with other duties, that it fails to give zest to family life at table.

But there are a great many homes that cannot afford to keep a room exclusively for the table hours, and this fact receives no attention at all from the builders of suburban streets and houses, who cram into their plans too many rooms of a diminutive size, forgetting that small houses need two good sitting-rooms, and that one should be a comfortable dining-hall, built expressly for the general day-life of a family. It is absurd to give in a small house a plan which is nothing more than a pocket edition of a large mansion.

Further, as we cannot have too much air in our little

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DINING-ROOM, BENGEO HOUSE, HERTS.

WALTER GAVE, *Architect*, London



DINING-ROOM IN A SCOTCH HOUSE

The walls hung with tapestry, and the windows treated architecturally, without curtains

R. S. LORIMER, A.R.S.A., *Architect*, Edinburgh

THE DINING-ROOM

houses and flats, furniture should occupy no more space than is necessary ; and speculative builders ought to be compelled by law to put certain fitments into their rooms, such as sideboards in the dining-rooms and wardrobes in bedrooms. All furniture which can be made a structural part of a house, and therefore a landlord's fixture, ought to be built as a matter of course, in these days of sanitary advance.

Who does not know the little dining-room with the following characteristics :

1. A table for mother, father, and three or four children. It is much too wide, filling a room as a fat man fills a chair.

2. A sideboard projecting far from the wall ; it almost touches papa's chair during meals, so the waitress cannot pass by without a wriggling effort.

3. A fireplace at one side which adds another difficulty to the maid's discomfort.

In rooms of this kind the table should be narrow, not broad and square ; the ends should have extending leaves or hinged flaps ; then the table can be put away between meals.

What a pity it is that the first principles of house furnishing are not taught to school children ! If they were, we should soon have many improvements in the conveniences granted by landlords ; for the public would then have decided views on many important questions, such as the proportions of a dining-room. We get little only because we do not know what we want.

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

When dining-rooms are without fitments, their proportions should be determined by the necessary furniture: a table, with chairs at the ends and at each side, a good fireplace, a long sideboard with drawers and cupboards, and a cabinet for glass and for tea and coffee sets. These breakables ought to be kept in the dining-room, and a mistress should know how many pieces there are in each set; she can then verify their number once a day and keep the housemaid under discipline. Modern housewives shirk many little duties of this kind, and some have nervous attacks if they are asked "to think about such worrying trifles." "We are upper servants," they say, "and get no regular payment for our work." However that may be, a housewife's duty is to watch over her household things, keeping those which are perishable and valuable under constant supervision. For this purpose it is useful to have in the dining-room a cabinet with glass doors, so that the table ware may be counted once a day without trouble or difficulty.

And now, having in mind the necessary furniture, what is the smallest width for a comfortable dining-room? Fifteen feet. With a narrow table we can manage with rather less; but eighteen feet would be much better, of course. If we take fifteen feet as a minimum, and decline to make it less, no fault can be found with us—not even by suburban landlords! Eighteen feet long is another minimum, if we wish the dining-room to be convenient.

THE DINING-ROOM

Increase the width to eighteen feet, and the length should range from twenty-four to thirty. Eighteen by twenty-five is a good size for a family that entertains, particularly when a fine bay-window at one end allows the table to be lengthened.

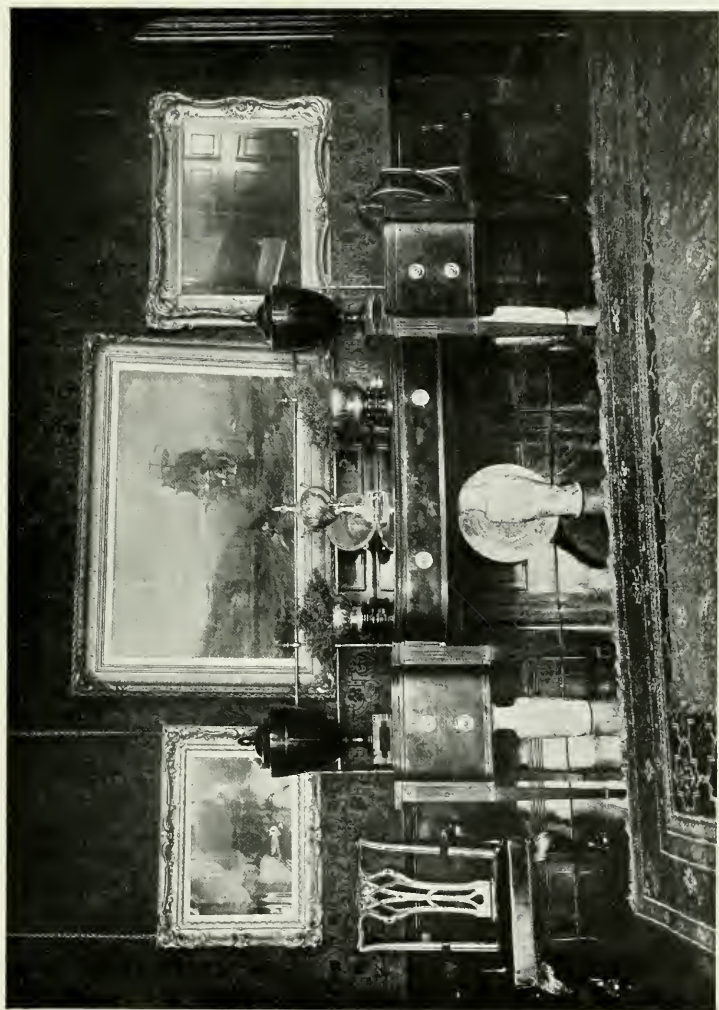
It is not an easy matter to light the dining-room. If you choose a western aspect, the level sun shines in at the usual dinner-hour, and some persons object to that. "It is a nuisance," they argue, "because the blinds have to be drawn, and a dining-room is then too dim to be at all pleasant." That depends on the thickness of the blinds. When sunlight enters a room through a white blind which is not too thick, it fills the air with a gentle and refreshing radiance. On the other hand, architects say: "The best aspect in a small house is from south to south-east. In the evening, at dinner, the landscape is lighted up from behind; at luncheon, in the middle of the day, the sun is too high to be troublesome; and in the morning, at breakfast-time, it is welcome if it does shine in upon the table. In large houses a northern light is good for dining-rooms, because breakfast is not taken there. If there is a little west in the aspect it does not matter, for the sun will not be annoying.

Side windows are bad in a dining-room, and for two reasons. We face them if we sit at one side of the table, and our shadows fall across our plates when we dine with our backs to the light. A window at one end of the room, opposite the carver, is generally

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

accepted as most convenient, unless the room is very long, when a side window may be necessary for the carver's sake.

Finally, a dining-room should communicate with the kitchen, either by a serving-hatch or by a serving-passage, or, again, by a lift from a basement. A serving-passage needs a hot closet heated by gas or by pipes from the kitchen boiler, so that plates and dishes may be kept warm till they are required.



DINING-ROOM IN A LONDON HOUSE
With English Furniture of the Eighteenth Century
From a photograph lent by JAMES ORROCK, R.I.



DAIS OF MUSIC ROOM, LITTLE COURT, FARTHINGSTONE

WALTER CAVE, *Architect*, London

CHAPTER III

SOME HINTS ON OTHER ROOMS

The Drawing-Room

PEOPLE have very different views concerning this apartment. Some look upon it as a place to be used just once a week, on Sunday only ; it has then a spick-and-span neatness, not unlike an apron of fine muslin newly starched and ironed.

No one is at all comfortable in a room of that kind, cold, formal, and stiff. It is meant to be looked at as an occasional penance, not to be lived in as a pleasure. The very furniture seems to revolt against the untidiness that accompanies daily use. All the coverings are immaculately neat, unwrinkled ; the chairs, put methodically in allotted positions, look new and over-polished ; and as to that fender in burnished steel, the maid-servant hates it fiercely, for it gives her two hours' work after a fire has burned during a whole day.

Then there is another type of drawing-room : it is used regularly, yet men go to it reluctantly after dinner, because their tobacco is said to rival moths in an attack on curtains and coverings. An air of ceremony abides here, and it reminds me always of the white surplices

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hanging on pegs in a vestry, while the choir men and boys are engaged on their own business or amusement.

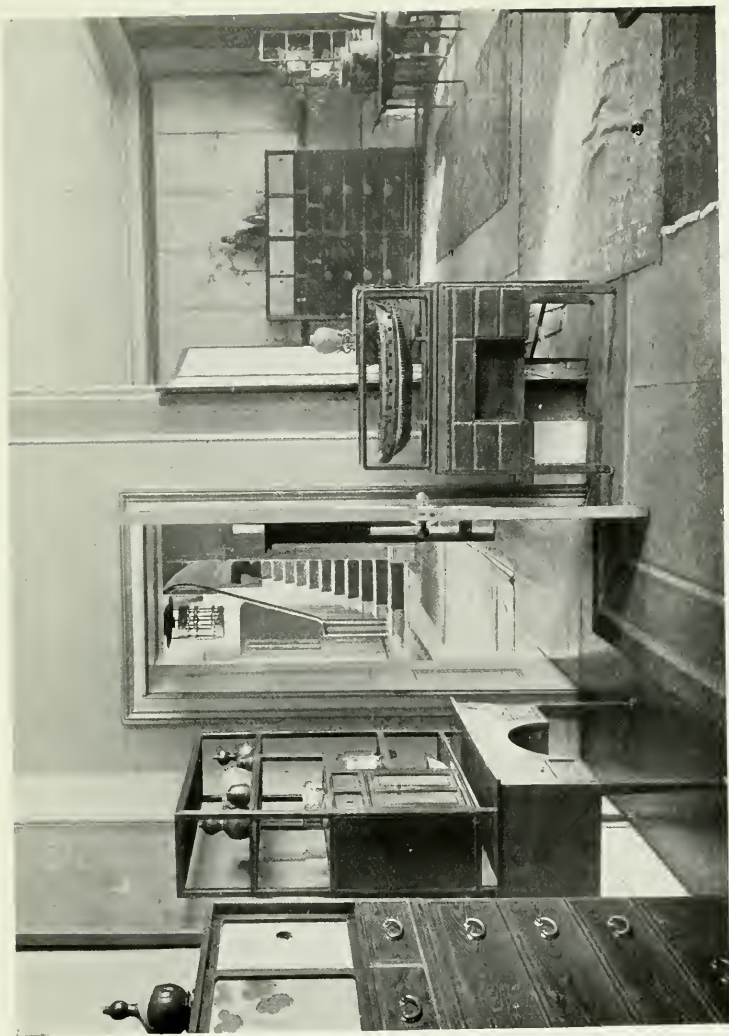
Why should we not give up the formal name, drawing-room? Why not call it the family-room or the evening-room? Small houses need nothing more than that; and the room could be made as pleasant as the new name, a place where the day's work and worry could be forgotten. Let it have a polished floor covered only with rugs; let the furniture be light and easy to move; and then, if friends come in after dinner, a little dance can be arranged in a few minutes. For this room, surely, is for dancing, music, and happy talk—the joys of family life.

It ought never to be less than seventeen feet wide. A square shape is perhaps the best in small houses, while a long one is delightful in big mansions and country seats, particularly when broken into compartments by pillars or by wide recesses.

Bay-windows are to be desired, because they form nooks and corners where Cupid may be happy with the right partners. Also, as friendly talk should divide us into groups, a drawing-room should have two fireplaces. One fire means a cold end to a room, which everybody avoids in the winter months.

Of course, the windows should have a warm, cheerful aspect; and let the sunset have a window to itself looking westward. Do not light the room either from one end or from both ends. In the first case a solitary window will attract every one in summer, leaving the

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DRAWING-ROOM IN A LONDON HOUSE

With a view of the Hall and Staircase

By permission of FRANK BRANGWYN, A.R.A.



DRAWING-ROOM IN A LONDON HOUSE
With white paneled walls. Note the simple fireplace and the fireguard
WALTER CAVE, *Architect*, London

SOME HINTS ON OTHER ROOMS

rest of the room empty ; while in the second case—with a window at each end—all persons and all things are seen in shadow against the light, a depressing effect always.

The best arrangement is to have one end window and several side windows, with good bays or recesses. Put the side windows at some little distance from the corners, leaving space enough for convenient pieces of furniture. But remember always that a drawing-room is inhospitable when there is more glass than wall, when the windows are too large. It is then like a glasshouse, too hot in summer and too cold in winter.

The Morning-Room.

Some houses with low rents are large enough for a morning-room, plainly furnished, and with a south or south-east aspect ; but most families would do well if they made this room into a lounge where children could enjoy their hobbies. Parents ought never to forget, though they often do, that a billiard table at home is one of the finest things in the world for young fellows, estranging them from the evening dangers of town life.

This does not mean that a hobby-room should be given up entirely to the sons' amusements. It may serve other purposes also, and belong to the whole family. Line the walls with bookcases, and put writing-tables in the bay-windows ; you have then a library and a sitting-room. It is not necessary that the billiard table should be full-sized, and no attention need be paid

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

to the way in which the table is lit during the day, because the game is usually played after office hours, in the evening, by artificial light.

The Billiard-Room.

When a room is for billiards only, the following hints are useful :

The walls should be very well built, or the noise of the game will disturb the privacy of other rooms.

A roof-light is best, casting no shadows over the table ; but high windows in the walls will do if they are not put on one side only of the room. There must be enough light from two sides to prevent the balls from casting shadows ; and the light must be above the table ; not on a level with it.

Twenty-four feet by eighteen is a good size for a billiard-room, giving twelve feet by six for the table, and six feet free space all round—enough to use a cue in. The room may with advantage be larger, for a *daïs* looks well in a billiard-room, and is greatly liked by onlookers.

Still, as a cue, when striking a ball at the edge of a table, is held at an angle, it occupies rather less than five feet horizontal space, so that a room twenty-two feet by seventeen is big enough if the site will not allow it to be larger.

In a room of this size a *daïs* cannot be built, but seats can be put in the corners on platforms, so that the game may be watched without hindrance to the players.

SOME HINTS ON OTHER ROOMS

Panelled walls are always welcome in billiard-rooms, and family portraits can be framed *into* the wood, a structural arrangement which is not difficult to manage. Pictures never look well when they are hung *on* panelled walls.

Finally, do not turn a front hall into a billiard-room. The game is constantly interrupted by traffic to the front door ; men cannot play in their shirt-sleeves ; and their tobacco smoke rises to the upper rooms and passage-ways. Houses in a damp climate retain for a long while the taint of stale cigar smoke.

The main points of my subject have now been considered, and every one has brought us back to the same principle : namely, that household art depends on clear thought and honest workmanship. When these necessary things are not valued a nation is in a bad way. I do not suppose that English brains have deteriorated in the same proportion as English taste : our craftsmen, probably, have as much intelligence as ever, but it lacks thoroughness and proper employment. Too often it is a bungling amateur, ever in a hurry to get finished.

What we need, I think, are two laws of State, one to check the misuse of advertising, and another to bring all trade catalogues and all shop-windows into the domain of public criticism. If tradesmen knew that their advertisements would be verified by the Board of Trade, and that their shop-windows would be subject to a criticism as careful as that which is given to books, plays, and

HINTS ON HOUSE FURNISHING

music, there would soon be a general improvement in the home arts and crafts.

Meantime, parents may do much by teaching their children the first principles of design and decoration. Every piece of furniture has a delightful story, like every detail of architecture; and a child's first lessons should have for their subject the history of household things.

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